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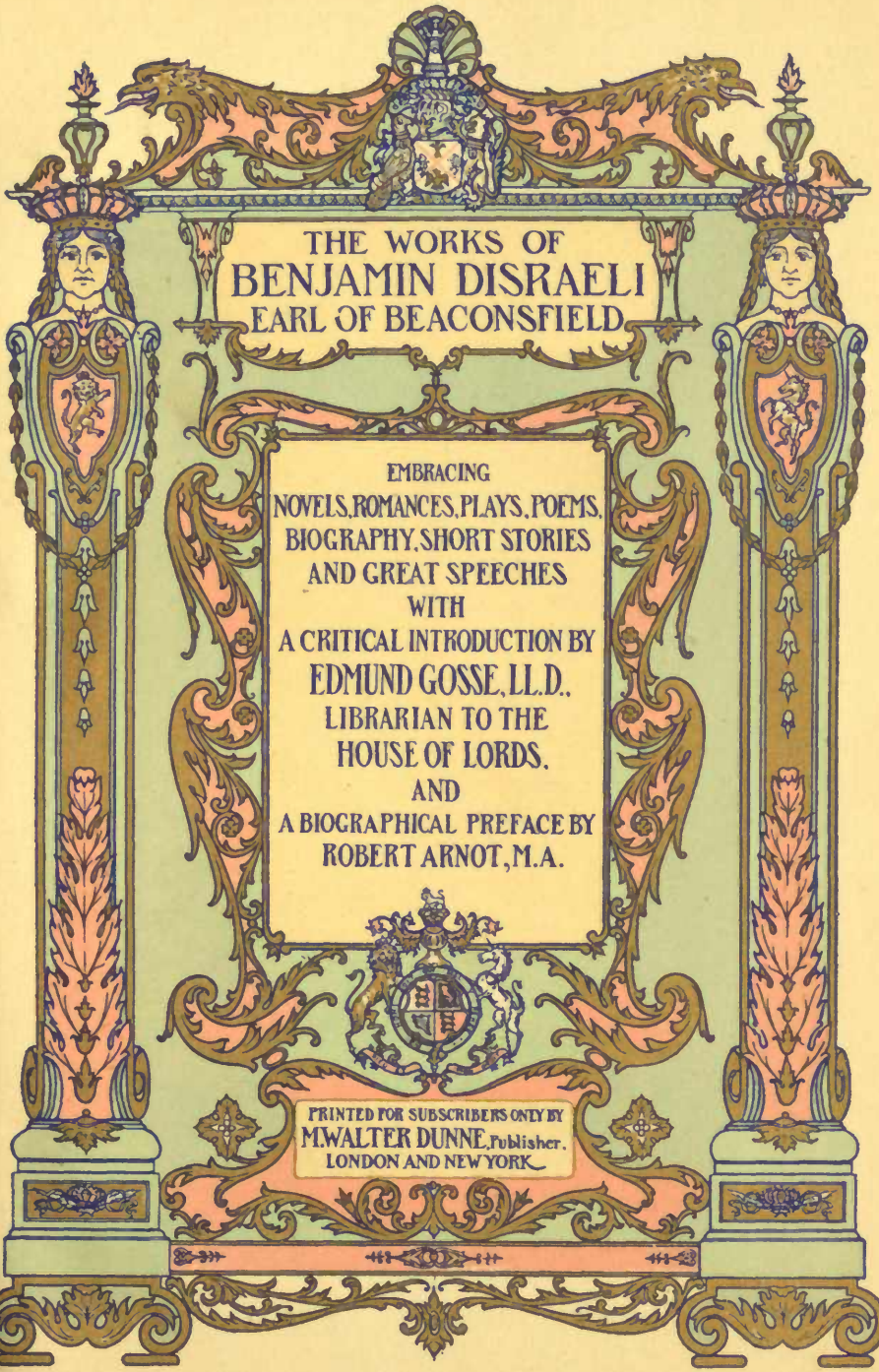
THE WORKS OF
BENJAMIN DISRAELI
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD
EMBRACING
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BIOGRAPHY, SHORT STORIES
AND GREAT SPEECHES
WITH
A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION BY
EDMUND GOSSE, LL.D.,
LIBRARIAN TO THE
HOUSE OF LORDS,
AND
A BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE BY
ROBERT ARNOT, M.A.
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B. Disraeli

VIVIAN GREY

A ROMANCE OF YOUTH

BY

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

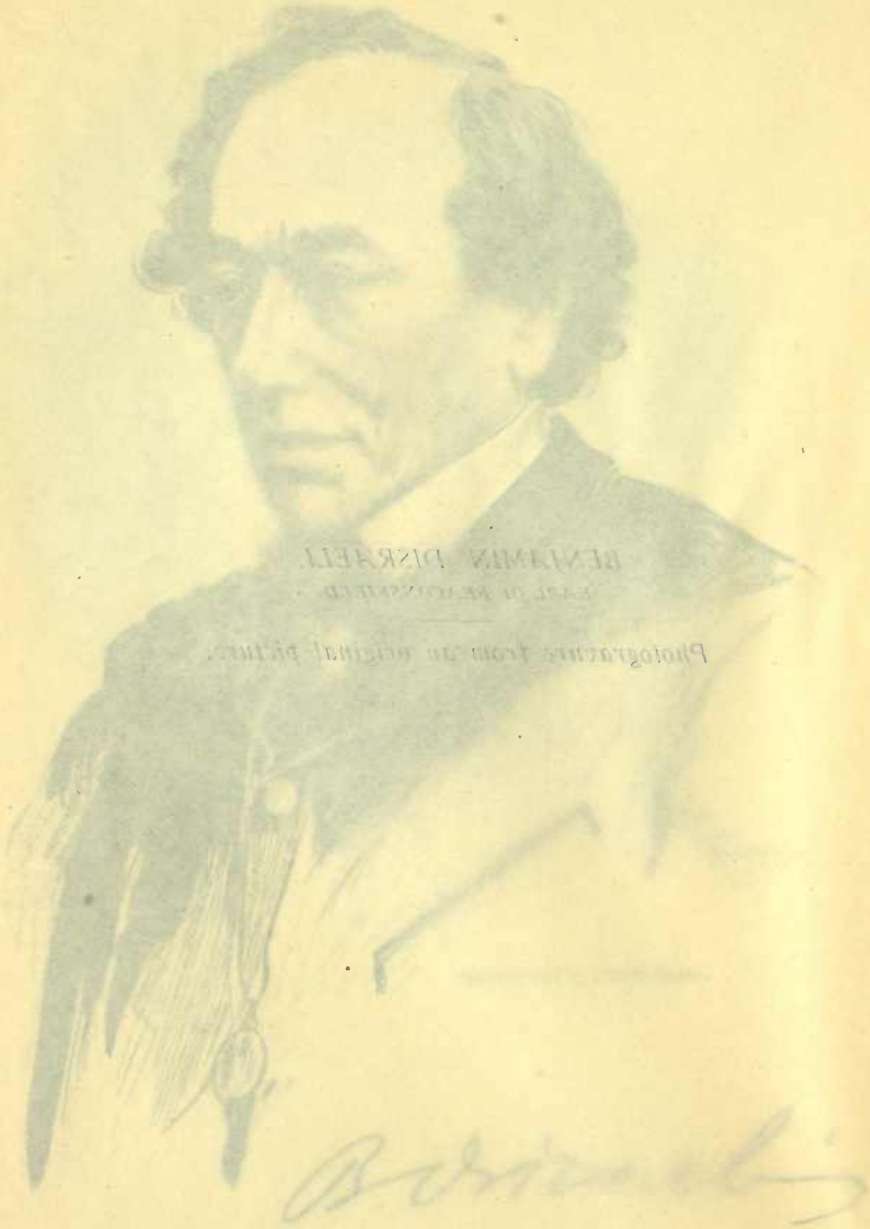
BENJAMIN DISRAELI.
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

Photogravure from an original picture.

AND A
BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE BY
ROBERT ARNOT, M.A.

VOLUME I.

M. WALTER DUNNE
NEW YORK AND LONDON



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THE WRITINGS

OF

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

It is not easy for a man whose sovereign ambition is seen to be leading him with great success in a particular direction to obtain due credit for what he accomplishes with less manifest success in another. There is no doubt that Disraeli as an author has, at all events until very lately, suffered from the splendour of his fame as a politician. But he was an author long before he became a statesman, and it certainly is a little curious that even in his youth, although he was always commercially successful with his books, they were never, as we say, "taken seriously" by the critics. His earliest novels were largely bought and produced a wide sensation, but they were barely accepted as contributions to literature. If we look back to the current criticism of those times, we find such a book as *Dacre,* a romance by the Countess of Morley which is now absolutely forgotten, treated with a dignity and a consideration never accorded to

The Young Duke or *Henrietta Temple.* Even Disraeli's satiric squibs, in the manner of Lucian and Swift, which seem to us among the most durable ornaments of light literature in the days of William IV., were read and were laughed at, but were not critically appraised.

So, too, at the middle period of Disraeli's literary life, such books as *Coningsby* and *Tancred* were looked upon as amusing commentaries on the progress of a strenuous politician, not by any means, or by any responsible person, as possible classics of our language. And at his third period, the ruling criticism of the hour was aghast at faults which now entertain us, and was blind to sterling merits which we are now ready to acknowledge. Shortly after his death, perhaps his most brilliant apologist was fain to admit that if Disraeli had been undistinguished as a speaker, his novels would have been "as the flowers of the field, charming for the day which was passing over them, and then forgotten." It is only within the last decade that a conviction has been gaining ground that some of these books were in themselves durable, not because they were the work of a man who became Prime Minister of England and made his sovereign Empress of India, but as much or as little as if they had been composed by a recluse in a hermitage. This impression has now become so general with enlightened critics that the danger seems to be that we should underrate certain excesses of rhetoric and the Corinthian mode, the errors of which used to be overemphasized, but should not, in a comparative survey of Victorian literature, be overlooked as serious drawbacks to our perfect enjoyment of the high-spirited, eloquent and ardent writings of Benjamin Disraeli. It

is in this spirit of moderation that the following attempt will be made to give a rapid sketch of his value as an English author.

I.

There is perhaps no second example of a writer whose work is divided, as is that of Disraeli, into three totally distinct periods. Other authors, as for example the poet Crabbe and in a less marked degree Rogers, have abandoned the practice of writing for a considerable number of years, and then have resumed it. But the case of Disraeli seems to be unique as that of a man who pursued the writing of books with great ardour during three brief and independent spaces of time. We have his first and pre-parliamentarian period, which began with *Vivian Grey* (1826) and closed with *Venetia* (1837). We have a second epoch, opening with *Coningsby* (1844) and ending with *Tancred* (1847), during which time he was working out his political destiny; and we have the novels which he wrote after he had won the highest distinctions in the State. Certain general characteristics are met with in all these three classes, but they have also differences which require to be noted and accounted for. It will therefore be convenient to treat them successively.

As oblivion scatters its poppy over the prose fiction of the reigns of George IV. and William IV., it becomes increasingly dangerous that criticism should take the early "fashionable" novels of Disraeli as solitary representations of literary satire or observation.

It is true that to readers of to-day this class of romance is exclusively suggestive of *Vivian Grey* and its fellows, with perhaps the *Pelham* of Bulwer. But this was not the impression of the original readers of these novels, who were amused by them, but found nothing revolutionary in their treatment of society. In the course of *The Young Duke,* written in 1829, Disraeli suggests an amiable rivalry with the romances "written by my friends Mr. Ward and Mr. Bulwer." The latter name had only just risen above the horizon, but that of Plumer Ward, forgotten as it now is, was one to conjure by. Ward was the author of *Tremaine* (1825) and *De Vere* (1827), two novels of the life of a modern English gentleman, which seem to a reader to-day to be insipid and dull enough. But they contained "portraits" of public persons, they undertook to hold the mirror up to the political and fashionable world of London, and they lashed that fastidiousness which was considered to be the foible of the age.

The books of Plumer Ward, who was an accomplished personage in advancing years, were treated with marked distinction in the press, and were welcomed by critics who deigned to take little notice of even such books as *Granby* and *Dacre.* But the stories of the youthful Disraeli belonged to a class held in still lower esteem than those just mentioned. They had to hold their own as best they might in rivalry with a huge flight of novels of fashionable life, all of them curiously similar in general treatment. Above these the romances of Plumer Ward rose in a sort of recognised dignity as two peaks around which were crowded innumerable hillocks. It is necessary to recall readers of to-day, who think of *Vivian Grey* as a work of amazing novelty, to the fact that the

genre it represents to us was one which had been lifted into high credit the year before by the consecrated success of *Tremaine,* and was at that moment cultivated by a multitude of minor novelists.

There was, however, a distinction, and it lay in the greater fund of animal spirits which Disraeli brought to his business. *Vivian Grey* was absurd, but it was fresh and popular, and it pleased at once. As the opening work of a literary career, it promised well; the impertinent young gentleman dashed off to Parnassus at a gallop. It was a bold bid for personal distinction, which the author easily perceived already to be "the only passport to the society of the great in England." *Vivian Grey* is little more than a spirited and daring boy's book; Disraeli himself called it "a hot and hurried sketch." It was a sketch of what he had never seen, yet of what he had begun to foresee with amazing lucidity. It is a sort of social fairy-tale, where everyone has exquisite beauty, limitless wealth and exalted rank, where the impossible and the hyperbolic are the only homely virtues. There has always been a tendency to exalt *Vivian Grey* at the expense of *The Young Duke* (1831), Disraeli's next leading performance; and indeed the former has had its admirers who have preferred it to all the others in this period. The difference is, however, not so marked as might be supposed. In *The Young Duke* the manner is not so burlesque, but there is the same roughness of execution, combined with the same rush and fire. In either book, what we feel to-day to be the great objection to our enjoyment is the lack of verisimilitude. Who can believe in the existence of persons whose titles are the Earl of Fitz-Pompey and Baron Deprivyseal, or whose names are Lady Aphrodite and Sir Carte

Blanche? The descriptions are "high-falutin" beyond all endurance, and there is particularly noticeable a kind of stylistic foppery, which is always hovering between sublimity and a giggle.

A line in Disraeli's unfortunate tragedy of *Alarcos* pathetically admits "Ay! ever pert is youth that baffles age!" The youth of Disraeli was "pert" beyond all record, and those who cannot endure to be teased should not turn to his early romances, or indeed to any of his writings. *Henrietta Temple* is the boldest attempt he ever made to tell a great consecutive story of passion, and no doubt there have been those who have palpitated over the love-at-first-sight of Ferdinand Armine and Henrietta Temple. But Disraeli's serious vein is here over-luscious; the love-passages are too emphatic and too sweet. An early critic spoke of this *dulcia vitia* of style, which we meet with even in *Contarini Fleming*, as the sin by which the young author was most easily beset. His attempts at serious sentiment and pompous reflection are too often deplorable, because inanimate and stilted. When he warns a heroine against an error of judgment by shouting: "'Tis the madness of the fawn who gazes with adoration on the lurid glare of the anaconda's eye," or murmurs, "Farewell, my lovely bird, I'll soon return to pillow in thy nest," we need all the stimulus of his irony and his velocity to carry us over such marsh-lands of cold style.

Of these imperfections fewer are to be found in *Venetia* and fewest in *Contarini Fleming*. This beautiful romance is by far the best of Disraeli's early books, and that in which his methods at this period can be most favourably studied. A curious shadow of Disraeli himself is thrown over it all; it cannot be

styled in any direct sense an autobiography, and yet the mental and moral experiences of the author animate every chapter of it. This novel is written with far more ease and grace than any previous book of the author, and Contarini gives a reason which explains the improvement in his creator's style when he remarks, "I wrote with greater facility than before, because my experience of life was so much increased that I had no difficulty in making my characters think and act." *Contarini Fleming* belongs to 1831, when its writer, at the comparatively ripe age of twenty-seven, had already seen a vast deal of man and of the world of Europe.

We are not to believe the preposterous account that Contarini-Disraeli gives of his methods of composition: "My thoughts, my passion, the rush of my invention, were too quick for my pen. Page followed page; as a sheet was finished I threw it on the floor; I was amazed at the rapid and prolific production, yet I could not stop to wonder. In half a dozen hours I sank back exhausted, with an aching frame. I rang the bell, ordered some refreshment, and walked about the room. The wine invigorated me and warmed up my sinking fancy, which, however, required little fuel. I set to it again, and it was midnight before I retired to my bed." At this rate we may easily compute that the longest of his novels would be finished in a week. *Contarini Fleming* seems to have occupied him the greater part of a year. He liked the public to think of him, exquisitely habited, his long hair falling about his eyes, flinging forth a torrent of musky and mellifluous improvisation; as a matter of fact he was a very hard worker, laborious in the arts of composition.

It is to be noted that the whole tone of *Contarini Fleming* is intensely literary. The appeal to the intellectual, to the fastidious, reader is incessant. This is an attitude always rare in English fiction, but at that epoch almost unknown, and its presence in the writings of Disraeli gave them a cachet. Under all the preposterous conversation, all the unruly turmoil of description, runs a strong thread of entirely sober political and philosophic ambition. Disraeli striving with all his might to be a great poet of the class of Byron and Goethe, a poet who is also a great mover and master of men—this is what is manifest to us throughout *Contarini Fleming*. It is almost pathetically manifest, because Disraeli,—whatever else he grew to be,—never became a poet. And here, too, his wonderful clairvoyance, and his command over the vagaries of his own imagination, come into play, for he never persuades himself, with all his dithyrambics, that Contarini is quite a poet.

A new influence is felt upon his style, and it is a highly beneficial tone. Up to this date, Disraeli had kept Byron before him, and in his serious moments he had endeavoured to accomplish in prose what the mysterious and melancholy poet of the preceding generation had done in verse. The general effect of this Byronism, in spite of a certain buoyancy which carried the reader onwards, had been apt to be wearisome, in consequence of the monotony of effort. The fancy of the author had been too uniformly grandiose, and in the attempt to brighten it up he had sometimes passed over into positive failure. The most unyielding admirers of his early novels can hardly contradict a reader who complains that he finds the adventures of the bandits at Jonsterna insupportable

and the naïveté of Christiana mawkish. There are pages in *Alroy* that read as if they were written for a wager, to see how much balderdash the public will endure. Disraeli seems to have been conscious of this weakness, and he tried to relieve the pompous gravity of his passionate scenes by episodes of irony and satire. From his earliest days, these were apt to be very happy; they were inspired, especially in the squibs, by Lucian and Swift.

But in *Contarini Fleming* we detect a new flavour, and it is a very fortunate one. The bitterness of Swift was never quite in harmony with the genius of Disraeli, but the *verve* of Voltaire was. The effect of reading *Zadig* and *Candide* was the completion of the style of Disraeli; the "strange mixture of brilliant fantasy and poignant truth" which he rightly perceived to be the essence of the philosophic *contes* of Voltaire, completed his own intellectual education. Henceforth he does not allow his seriousness to overweigh his liveliness; if he detects a tendency to bombast, he relieves it with a brilliant jest. Count de Moltke and the lampoons offer us a case to our hand; "he was just the old fool who would make a cream cheese," says Contarini, and the startled laugh which greets him is exactly of the same order as those which were wont to reward the statesman's amazing utterances in Parliament.

In spite of a certain insincerity, the volumes of *Contarini Fleming* cannot but be read with pleasure. The mixture of Byron and Voltaire is surprising, but it produces some agreeable effects. There is a dash of Shelley in it, too, for the life on the isle of Paradise with Alcesté Contarini is plainly borrowed from *Epipsychidion*. Disraeli does not even disdain a touch

of "Monk" Lewis without his voluptuousness, and of Mrs. Radcliffe without her horrors, for he is bent on serving up an olio entirely in the taste of the day. But through it all he is conspicuously himself, and the dedication to beauty and the extraordinary intellectual exultation of such a book as *Contarini Fleming* are borrowed from no exotic source.

It is impossible to overlook the fascination which Venice exercises over Disraeli in these early novels. Contarini's great ambition was to indite "a tale which should embrace Venice and Greece." Byron's *Life and Letters* and the completion of Rogers's *Italy,* with Turner's paradisiacal designs, had recently awakened to its full the romantic interest which long had been gathering around "the sun-girt city." Whenever Disraeli reaches Venice his style improves, and if he mourns over her decay, his spirits rise when he has to describe her enchantments by moonlight. He reserves his most delicate effects for Greece and Venice:—

> "A Grecian sunset! The sky is like the neck of a dove; the rocks and waters are bathed with a violet light. Each moment it changes; each moment it shifts into more graceful and more gleaming shadows. And the thin white moon is above all; the thin white moon, followed by a single star, like a lady by a page."

There are many passages like this in *Venetia,* the romance about Byron and Shelley, which Disraeli was thought indiscreet in publishing so soon after Byron's death. In the story the heroine Venetia is the daughter of Shelley (Marmion Herbert) and the *fiancée* of Byron (Cadurcis). Marmion is a most melodramatic figure, but the indiscretions are not noticeable nowadays, while the courage with which

the reviled and hated Shelley is described in the preface to Lord Lyndhurst as one of "the most renowned and refined spirits that have adorned these our latter days" is highly characteristic of Disraeli. The reception of Lord Cadurcis in the House of Peers and the subsequent riot in Palace Yard mark, perhaps, the highest point in direct narrative power which the novelist had yet reached; but *Venetia* was not liked, and Disraeli withdrew from literature into public life.

II.

When Disraeli resumed the art of the novelist, he was no longer talking of what lay outside his experience when he touched on politics. In 1837 he had entered the House at last, as member for Maidstone, and although his enemies roared him down on the first occasion of his rising to speak, he soon learned how to impose his voice on Parliament. In 1839 his declaration that "the rights of labour are as sacred as the rights of property" made him famous, and in 1841 he was one of Sir Robert Peel's conservative army in the House. Then followed the formation of the Young England party, with Disraeli as one of its leaders; these men broke away from Peel, and held that the Tory party required stringent reform from within. It was in 1843 that Henry Thomas Hope of Deepdene urged, at a meeting of the Young Englanders, the expediency of Disraeli's "treating in a literary form those views and subjects which were the matter of their frequent conversations." Disraeli instantly returned to literary composition, and produced in

quick succession the four books which form the second section of his work as an author; these are *Coningsby, Sybil, Tancred,* and the *Life of Lord George Bentinck.*

In this group of books we observe, in the first place, a great advance in vitality and credibility over the novels of the earlier period. Disraeli is now describing what he knows, no longer what he hopes in process of time to know. He writes from within, no longer from without, the world of political action. These three novels and a biography are curiously like one another in form, and all equally make a claim to be considered not mere works of entertainment, but serious contributions to political philosophy. The assumption is borne out by the character of the books, each of which had a definite aim and purpose. *Coningsby* was designed to make room for new talent in the Tory party by an unflinching attack on the "mediocrities." In *Sybil* the heartless abuse of capital and the vices of class-distinction are exposed. *Tancred* is a vision of better things to follow upon the reforms already indicated. In *Lord George Bentinck,* under the guise of a record of the struggle between Protection and Free Trade, we have a manual of personal conduct as applied to practical politics.

In all these works, narrative pure and simple inclines to take a secondary place. It does so least in *Coningsby,* which as a story is the most attractive book of Disraeli's middle period, and one of the most brilliant stories of political character ever published. The tale is interspersed with historical essays, which impede its progress, but add to its weight and value. Where, however, the author throws himself into his narrative, the advance he has made in power, and

particularly in truth of presentment, is very remarkable. In the early group of his novels he had felt a great difficulty in transcribing conversations so as to produce a natural and easy effect. He no longer, in *Coningsby,* is confronted by this artificiality. His dialogues are now generally remarkable for their ease and nature. The speeches of Rigby (who represents Crofton Croker), of Lord Monmouth (who stands for Lord Hertford), of the Young Englanders themselves, of the laughable chorus of Taper and Tadpole, who never "despaired of the Commonwealth," are often extremely amusing. In *Coningsby* we have risen out of the rose-coloured mist of unreality which hung over books like *The Young Duke* and *Henrietta Temple.* The agitated gentleman whose peerage hangs in the balance, and who, on hearing that the Duke of Wellington is with the King, breathes out in a sigh of relief, "Then there *is* a Providence," is a type of the subsidiary figure which Disraeli had now learned to introduce with infinite lightness of irony.

Disraeli had a passion for early youth, and in almost all his books he dwells lovingly upon its characteristics. It is particularly in *Contarini Fleming* and in *Coningsby,* that is to say in the best novels of his first and of his second period, that he lingers over the picture of schoolboy life with tenderness and sympathy. We have only to compare them, however, to see how great an advance he had made in ten years in his power of depicting such scenes. The childish dreams of Contarini are unchecked romance, and though the friendship with Musæus is drawn with delicacy and insight, and though that is an extremely pretty scene where Christiana soothes the pride of Contarini, yet a manliness and a reality are

missing which we find in the wonderful Eton scenes of *Coningsby*. Disraeli's comprehension of the feelings of half-grown ambitious boys of good family was extraordinary, and when we consider that he had never been to a public school, his picture of the life and conversation at Eton is very remarkable for its fidelity to nature. The relation of the elder schoolboys to one another, a theme to which he was fond of recurring, is treated in a very adroit and natural spirit, not without a certain Dorian beauty. His preoccupation with the sentiments and passions of schoolboys was rather crudely found fault with at the time. We need have no difficulty in comprehending the pleasure he felt in watching the expansion of those youthful minds from whom he hoped for all that was to make England wise and free. The account of Coningsby's last night at Eton is one of the most deeply-felt pages which Disraeli ever composed, and here it may be said that the careful avoidance of all humour,—an act of self-denial which a smaller writer would not have been capable of,—is justified by the dignified success of a very dangerous experiment.

The portraiture of living people is performed with the greatest good-nature. It is difficult to believe that the most satirised could really be infuriated, so kindly and genial is the caricaturing. We are far here from Swift's bludgeon and from Voltaire's poisoned needle. The regeneration of the social order in England, as Disraeli dreamed it, involved the removal of some mediocrities, but he was neither angry nor impatient. The "brilliant personages who had just scampered up from Melton, thinking it probable that Sir Robert might want some moral Lords of the Bedchamber," and the Duke who "might have acquired considera-

ble information, if he had not in his youth made so many Latin verses," were true to their principles, and would scarcely have done more than blush faintly when he poked his fun at them. Of all the portraits none is more interesting than that of the dark pale stranger, Sidonia, as he revealed himself to Coningsby at the inn in the forest, over the celebrated dish of "still-hissing bacon and eggs that looked like tufts of primroses." Sidonia was a figure which was to recur, and to become in the public mind almost coincident with that of Disraeli himself.

When we pass from *Coningsby* to *Sybil* we find the purely narrative interest considerably reduced in the pursuit of a scheme of political philosophy. This is of all Disraeli's novels the one which most resembles a pamphlet on a serious topic. For this reason, it has never been a favourite among his works, and his lighter readers have passed it over with a glance. *Sybil*, however, is best not read at all if it is not carefully studied. In the course of *Coningsby*, that young hero had found his way to Manchester, and had discovered in it a new world, "pregnant with new ideas, and suggestive of new trains of thought and feeling." His superficial observation had revealed many incongruities in our methods of manipulating wealth, and Disraeli had sketched the portrait of Mr. Jawster Sharp with a superfluity of sarcastic wit. But it was not until somewhat later that the condition of the working classes in our northern manufacturing districts began to attract his most serious attention. The illustrious and venerable friend who alone (in 1904) survives to bear witness to the sentiments of Young England sixty years ago tells me that he accompanied Disraeli on the journey which led to the

composition of *Sybil,* and that he never, in long years of intimacy, saw him so profoundly moved as he was at the aspect of the miserable dwellings of the hand-loom workers.

All this is reflected on the surface of *Sybil,* and notwithstanding curious faults in execution, the book bears the impress of a deep and true emotion. Oddly enough, the style of Disraeli is never more stilted than it is in the conversations of the poor in this story. When Gerard, the weaver, wishes to prevent the police-inspector from arresting his daughter, he remarks, "Advance and touch this maiden, and I will fell you and your minions like oxen at their pasture." Well may the serjeant answer, "You *are* a queer chap." Criticism goes further and says, "You are a chap who never walked in wynd or factory of a Yorkshire town." This want of nature, which did not extend to Disraeli's conversations among well-to-do folks, was a real misfortune, and gave *Sybil* no chance of holding its own in rivalry with such realistic studies of the depression of trade in Manchester as Mrs. Gaskell was presently to produce, nor with the simplicity of dialogue in Dickens's *Christmas Stories,* which were just now (in 1845) running their popular course. A happier simplicity of style, founded on a closer familiarity, would have given fresh force to Disraeli's burning indignation, and have helped the cause of Devilsdust and Dandy Mick. But the accident of stilted speech must not blind us to the sincere and glowing emotion that inspired the pictures of human suffering in *Sybil.*

There followed *Tancred,* which, as it has always been reported, continued to the last to be the author's favourite among his literary offspring. Disraeli had

little sympathy with either of the great parties which in that day governed English political life. As time went on, he became surer than ever of the degeneracy of modern society, and he began to despair of discovering any cure for it. In *Tancred* he laid aside in great measure his mood of satirical extravagance. The whole of this book is steeped in the colours of poetry,—of poetry, that is to say, as the florid mind of Disraeli conceived it. It opens,—as all his books love to open,—with the chronicle of an ardent and innocent boy's career. This is commonplace. But when Tancred, who is merely the author's customary type of a young Englishman born in the purple, arrives in the Holy Land, a flush of pure romance passes over the whole texture of the narrative. Real life is forgotten, and we move in a fabulous, but intensely picturesque, world of ecstasy and dream.

The prerogative of Judaism, as it had been laid down by Sidonia in *Coningsby,* is emphasized and developed, and is indeed made the central theme of the story, in *Tancred.* This novel is inspired by an outspoken and enthusiastic respect for the Hebrew race and a perfect belief in its future. In the presence of the mighty monuments of Jerusalem, Disraeli forgets that he is a Christian and an ambitious member of the English Parliament. His only solicitude is to recover his privileges as a Jew, and to recollect that he stands by the majestic cradle of his race. He becomes interpenetrated with solemn mysticism; a wind of faith blows in his hair. He cries "God never spoke except to an Arab," and we are therefore not surprised to find an actual divine message presently pronounced in Tancred's ears as he stands on the summit of Mount Sinai. This is, perhaps, the boldest

flight of imagination that occurs in the writings of Disraeli. Tancred endeavours to counteract the purely Hebraic influences of Palestine by making a journey of homage to Astarte, a mysterious and beautiful Pagan queen,—an "Aryan," as he loves to describe her,—who reigns in the mountains of Syria. But even she does not encourage him to put his trust in the progress of Western Europe.

Tancred is written in Disraeli's best middle style, full, sonorous, daring, and rarely sinking into bombast. It would even be too uniformly grave, if the fantastic character of Fakredeen did not relieve the solemnity of the discourse with his amusing tirades. Like that of all Disraeli's novels, the close of this one is dim and unsatisfactory. If there is anything that the patient reader wants to know it is how the Duke and Duchess of Bellemont behaved to the Lady of Bethany when they arrived at Jerusalem and found their son in the kiosk under her palm-tree. But this is curiosity of a class which Disraeli is not unwilling to awaken but which he never cares to satisfy. He places the problems in a heap before us, and he leaves us to untie the knots. It is a highly characteristic trait of his mind as a writer that he is forever preoccupied with the beginnings of things, and as little as possible with their endings.

III.

Nearly a quarter of a century passed, during which Disraeli slowly rose to the highest honours in the State. Lord Derby died, and the novelist, already

leader of the House of Commons, found himself called to be Prime Minister of England. His first administration, however, was brief, and in the last days of 1868 he resigned in favour of Mr. Gladstone. The Liberals were in for five years, and Disraeli, in opposition, found a sort of table-land stretch in front of him after so much arduous climbing. It was at this moment, shortly after the resignation of the Tory Ministry, that the publisher of a magazine approached him with the request that he would write a novel to appear in its pages; he was offered, it is said, a sum of money far in excess of what anyone, at that time, had ever received for "serial rights." Disraeli refused the offer, but it may have drawn his thoughts back to literature, and in the course of 1869, after the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland was completed, he found time to write what is unquestionably the greatest of his literary works, the superb ironic romance of *Lothair*.

Eminent as he was, and eminently successful, Disraeli was far, in 1870, from having conquered public opinion in England. The reception of his new novel was noisy, and enjoyed to the full the clamours of advertisement, but it was not favourable. The critics laughed the book to scorn, and called it a farce and a failure. The *Quarterly Review*, in one of its most savage diatribes, declared that it was "as dull as ditch-water and as flat as a flounder," and in a graver mood reproved it as a mere "bid for the bigoted voices of Exeter Hall." Some of the criticisms were not wanting in acumen. It was perceived at once that, as Theodora Campion is the heroine of the book, it was an error in art to kill her off in the middle of it. Moreover, it is only fair to admit that

if the stormy Parliamentarian life Disraeli had led so long had given him immense personal advantages, it had also developed some defects. It had taught him boundless independence and courage, it had given him a rare experience of men and manners, and it had lifted his satire far above petty or narrow personal considerations. But it had encouraged a looseness of utterance, a mixture of the colloquial and the bombastic, which was unfortunate. In the best parts of *Coningsby* and *Tancred* he had shown himself a very pure writer of English. But *Lothair,* even in its corrected form,—and the first edition is a miracle of laxity,—is curiously incorrect. It reads as if it were taken down from the flowing speech of a fine orator, not as if it were painfully composed in a study. It contains surprising ellipses, strange freaks of grammar. There was all this, and more, to encourage the critics, whom Disraeli had gone out of his way to affront in a violent epigram, to attack *Lothair* with contempt and resentment.

The critics took irony for tumidity. They thought that the sardonic novelist was the dupe of the splendours which he invented and described. But if one thing is more evident than another to-day it is that this gorgeous story of a noble boy whose guardians, a Presbyterian earl and a Roman cardinal, quarrelled for his soul and for his acres, is an immense satire from first to last. In Disraeli's own words, used in another sense, the key-note of *Lothair* is "mockery blended with Ionian splendour." Never had he mocked so dauntlessly, never had his fancy been more splendid, and those who criticise the magnificence must realise that it was intentional. It was thus that Disraeli loved to see life, and most of all

the life he laughed at. He had always been gorgeous, but he gave himself rein in *Lothair;* all is like the dream of a Lorenzo de' Medici or an Aurungzebe. Nothing is done by halves. Muriel Towers was set on "the largest natural lake that inland England boasts," some lake far larger than Windermere and entirely unsuspected by geographers. This piece of water is studded with "green islands," which is natural. But the author cannot stay his hand: this largest of the English lakes is also alive with "golden gondolas," which are rarer objects. In one of the odd little flashes of self-criticism which illuminate the book, Lothair says of a certain Northern garden, with its fanes and its fountains, its glittering statues and its Babylonian terraces, that there are "perhaps too many temples."

There are perhaps too many temples in the landscape of *Lothair,* but they were put in on purpose. The splendour is part of the satire. When the hero has ordered an architect to make some plans for a building, the door opens and servants enter bearing "a large and magnificent portfolio of morocco, made of prelatial purple with broad bands of gold and alternate ornaments of a cross and a coronet." It is the sort of portfolio that a Belshazzar might have used, but no English master-builder since time began ever launched forth into such magnificence. This is characteristic of Disraeli and of his book; it pleased him to wrap all his fancies in jewelled cloth of gold. He chose that the world should consist of nothing but Tudor palaces in colossal parks, and that time should be no other than a perpetual Holy Week of golden ceremonial. He knew his public, and that it adored these follies. He spoke to them in the language that

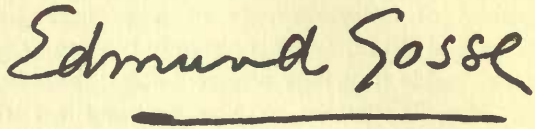
they loved, but in a tone of the most seraphical disdain and irony.

What marks the whole of Disraeli's writings more perhaps than any other quality is the buoyant and radiant temperament of their author. In *Lothair* he is like an inspired and enfranchised boy, set free from all the trammels of reality, and yet bringing to the service of his theme the results of an extraordinary inherited experience. If the picture is not real, we may take courage to say that it is far better than reality, more rich, more entertaining, more intoxicating. We have said that it is carelessly written, but that is part of the author's superb self-confidence, and when he is fortunately inspired, he obtains here an ease of style, a mastery which he had never found before. The sureness of his touch is seen in the epigrams which strew the pages of *Lothair,* and have become part of our habitual speech,—the phrase about eating "a little fruit on a green bank with music"; that which describes the hansom cab—"'Tis the gondola of London." This may lead us to consider that Disraeli is one of those who have felt most vividly and expressed most gaily the peculiar physical beauty of London. He saw the Park as the true Londoner sees it, when "the chestnuts are in silver bloom, and the pink May has flushed the thorns, and banks of sloping turf are radiant with plots of gorgeous flowers, when the water glitters in the sun, and the air is fragrant with that spell which only can be found in metropolitan mignonette." He describes as no one else has ever done with equal mastery a stately and successful house-party in a great country mansion. He had developed, when he composed *Lothair,* a fuller sense

of beauty than he had ever possessed before, but it revelled in forms that were partly artificial and partly fabulous.

Disraeli began his career, as we have pointed out in the earlier part of this essay, as a purveyor to the public of entertainment in a popular and not very dignified kind. He contended with the crowd of fashionable novelists whose books consoled the leisure of Mrs. Wititterly as she reclined on the drawing-room sofa. He found rivals in Bulwer and Mrs. Gore, and a master in Plumer Ward. His brilliant stories sold, but at first they won him little advantage. Slowly, by dint of his inherent force of genius, his books have not merely survived their innumerable fellows, but they have come to represent to us the form and character of a whole school; nay, more, they have come to take the place in our memories of a school which but for them would have utterly passed away and been forgotten. Disraeli, accordingly, is unique, not merely because his are the only fashionable novels of the pre-Victorian period which anyone ever reads nowadays, but because in his person that ineffable manner of the "thirties" reaches an isolated sublimity, and finds a permanent place in literature. But if we take a still wider view of the literary career of Disraeli, we are bound to perceive that the real source of the interest which his brilliant books continue to possess is the evidence their pages reveal of the astonishing personal genius of the man. Do what we will, we find ourselves looking beyond Contarini Fleming and Sidonia and Vivian Grey to the adventurous Jew who, by dint of infinite resolution and an energy which never slept, conquered all

the prejudices of convention, and trod English society beneath his foot in the triumphant irony of success. It is the living Disraeli who is always magnificently evident in the fascination of his printed pages.



BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE

On April 19, 1881, ended one of the most extraordinary careers recorded in English political annals.

To achieve preëminence in political life in the face of exceptional obstacles is an infallible sign of power if not of genius. The career of Disraeli can scarcely be dispassionately criticised, but there can be no question about the force of character and talent which triumphed over obstacles that are matters of history; which placed him in a position to defy, if not to overcome, inborn prejudices; which assured him in his leadership of a party that regarded him distrustfully till he dazzled them with success.

Lord Beaconsfield was of Jewish descent; he came of the Separate People which, scattered from a land of its own, has, save in the New World, long been persecuted by Christian intolerance. His family was ancient. Allied to that old Hebrew aristocracy in Spain which embraced individuals of the stamp of his own Sidonia, it traced its descent through the merchant princes of Venice to a stem transplanted from the East in early days. But, like other privileges, such claims of blood in England came under the head of Jewish disabilities, and did less than nothing to help him in the struggle toward a position that

seemed practically unattainable. Disraeli pioneered the way for his people, blunting in fifty years of hard fighting the prejudices that at every step opposed themselves to his own advance toward power; and Jews now sit as a matter of right among the representatives of the English people, legislating for interests in which they have as much concern as their fellows. This makes it difficult to measure the distance that then divided Disraeli from the Premiership of England.

Nor was birth Disraeli's only obstacle. His training had been for destinies less splendid. It is true that by their writings his father and grandfather had made their names known far beyond literary circles, and, as events showed, he inherited their cultivated tastes with more than their literary talents. But his father, who intended him for a government office, gave him a plain education only, and articled him early to an attorney by way of legal preparation. Born in 1805, young Disraeli was sent into a solicitor's chambers when those who became his contemporaries in public life were passing through the universities. In place of being educated, he educated himself.

The irresistible bent of Disraeli's inclinations soon burst the bonds of circumstance. He not only knew his own value, but had the happy faculty of impressing a sense of it on others. The art of making himself indispensable was the secret of his success. Imperturbable self-confidence, founded on a profound consciousness of equality or superiority, was the talisman with which he forced the doors that were shut against him. The tactics that gave *Vivian Grey* notoriety with mythical celerity became, when modified

by experience, precisely those with which Disraeli anticipated the lofty patronage of Whig leaders, and asserted himself with the Tory aristocracy. *Vivian Grey* gained for its author the praise of the novel-reading public, and won the ear of society.

In 1827, Disraeli made a tour in Italy and Greece, and in 1830 a pilgrimage to Syria and the Holy Land, where he found colouring for the Oriental fancies that inspired the glowing romance of *Alroy*. Then, also, he travelled through the sacred scenes which he revisited afterward in *Tancred* and *Lothair*. He came back to England to find the country in the vortex of the Reform agitation, and set himself to enter public life.

His first attempt was on the Buckinghamshire borough of High Wycombe, and the names of his sponsors vouch for the principles on which he stood. Joseph Hume and Daniel O'Connell promised and vowed in his behalf; yet a Whig held his ground against the Radical, and the name and interest of the Hon. Charles Grey carried the election against Disraeli. During the eventful year of the Reform Bill, he occupied his leisure and energy in the production of *Contarini Fleming,* pronounced by Heine to be one of the most original of works. *Contarini Fleming* was followed speedily by *Alroy* and by *What Is He?* the latter an answer to a question asked half-contemptuously in the political clubs. In this diatribe he gave evidence of those powers of sarcasm which did him and his party such service. In 1836 he reappeared on the hustings at High Wycombe, with no better fortune than before, and in the following year, standing for Taunton as a Conservative, was defeated by Mr. Labouchere.

In 1837, as member for Maidstone, he took his seat in the House of Commons. Instead of studying to conciliate prejudice, he set himself to provoke and defy it. Chalon and Maclise have preserved that striking exterior, strongly suggestive of foreign blood and foreign taste. His speech seemed almost as affected as its manner to an audience accustomed to the severe simplicity and unimpassioned delivery of English orators. It was in the debate on the Irish election petitions that Disraeli rose to break down in his famous maiden speech. He followed the Irish Liberator, his former patron, but now his bitter personal enemy. The scandal of their recent quarrel, an encounter with shillelaghs rather than a crossing of rapiers, was still fresh in every one's recollection; and, as was usually the case with those who fell foul of O'Connell, the Irishman had had the last word, and left his adversary the ridicule. When Tory candidate for Taunton, Disraeli had gone out of his way to make a violent attack on the Agitator in an election speech. The latter had retorted with a bitter surmise as to his assailant's descent from the Impenitent Thief on the Cross, and for once, Disraeli's usually impassive nature had been stung into madness. He vowed revenge when they should 'meet at Philippi.' Now the meeting had come, and with it his opportunity. When O'Connell resumed his seat, it was the new member who caught the Speaker's eye.

The story of Disraeli's failure has been often told. In spite of the habitual consideration of the House for a novice, the orator's style and manner were irresistible. Smiles broke into laughter, and the oration came to a premature end amid shouts of merriment —an almost unparalleled episode; but the peroration

of that maiden failure was the most remarkable of the many telling epilogues delivered by the speaker, for it contained the secret as well as the promise of his long series of triumphs: 'I am not at all surprised at the reception I have experienced. I have begun several times many things, and I have often succeeded at last. I shall sit down now; but the time is coming when you will hear me.' The House was disposed to listen with interest and even favour to a man who showed he had reason for his audacious defiance of its judgment.

During the next few years Disraeli spoke at intervals, and was listened to with growing attention as he learned to tone down his style and gestures in deference to the feelings of his critics. But he kept himself before the public as a writer rather than as a speaker, and added more to his literary than his political reputation. It was then that he wrote some of his most successful fiction, and at last in *Coningsby,* a political novel of the day, embodied the doctrines of a new school of political thought. In it he criticised the great party leaders, and in epigram, metaphor, and antithesis described their party strategy from his own point of view. Rigby, Tadpole, and Taper were recognized everywhere as sarcastic portraits, and few save the originals were prepared to set them down as caricatures. If, in other sketches, the resemblance to individuals was occasionally vague, here there could be no question of the vivid reproductions of representative types. In Lord Henry Sydney, Buckhurst, Millbank, the group of rising talent and advanced thought which clustered around Coningsby, men might study the 'Young England' party with whom the brilliant author sided. One of the band, at least, sat more than once in Disraeli's Cabinets.

Sybil, which followed *Coningsby* in 1845, is one of the most characteristic, and also one of the most important, of Disraeli's works, inasmuch as it throws a strong light on his thoughts and opinions on social and political questions. In the language of Egremont, who is a second Coningsby, we find the explanation of much that may seem inconsistent in the writer's political life. *Sybil,* as Disraeli tells us himself, had been suggested by the Chartist agitation; and, as a novel on the condition of the people, it ranks with the best by Kingsley. Reading it by the light of subsequent events, it is strange to see how lucidly Disraeli indicates the benefits of coöperation; and how decidedly he, at the same time, sets down his foot on those socialistic proclivities that interfere with family life.

Disraeli boldly and rightly prided himself on his Jewish descent and the glories of his race. Jews rich in gifts as in gold are the heroes of his fiction. But the most eloquent defence of his people against the prejudices of Christendom is to be found in that chapter of the 'Political Biography' which precedes the explanation of Lord George Bentinck's conduct with respect to Jewish disabilities. In brilliant argument he demonstrates that these prejudices are neither historically just nor dogmatically sound, and urges characteristically that Christendom owes the Jews a debt of gratitude for their services in carrying out the great doctrine of the Atonement.

In the preface to *Coningsby,* a novel which antedates the Bentinck biography by eight years, Disraeli reveals in words weighty yet remarkable for restraint his lasting faith in the sublime services rendered by his race to the world:

'Modern Jews had long laboured under the odium and stigma of mediæval malevolence. In the dark ages, when history was unknown, the passions of societies, undisturbed by traditionary experience, were strong, and their convictions, unmitigated by criticism, were necessarily fanatical. The Jews were looked upon in the middle ages as an accursed race, the enemies of God and man, the especial foes of Christianity. No one in those days paused to reflect that Christianity was founded by the Jews; that its Divine Author, in his human capacity, was a decendant of King David; that his doctrines avowedly were the completion, not the change, of Judaism; that the Apostles and the Evangelists, whose names men daily invoked, and whose volumes they embraced with reverence, were all Jews; that the infallible throne of Rome itself was established by a Jew; and that a Jew was the founder of the Christian Churches of Asia.'

Again, in *Tancred* Disraeli develops the same idea in language that glows with his intense racial proclivities:

'What is the essential foundation of the Christian scheme? The Expiation! A sacrificial Mediator with Jehovah, that expiatory intercessor born from the chosen house of the chosen people, yet blending in his inexplicable nature the divine essence with the human elements, appointed before all time, and purifying, by his atoning blood, the myriads that preceded and the myriads that will follow us, without distinction of creed or clime,—that is what you believe. I acknowledge the vast conception, dimly as my brain can partially embrace it. I understand thus much: the human race is saved; and without the apparent agency of a Hebrew Prince it could not have been saved.

Where, then, was the inexpiable crime of those who fulfilled the beneficent intention? The holy race supplied the victim and the immolators. What other race could have been entrusted with such a consummation? Was not Abraham prepared to sacrifice even his son? And with such a doctrine, that embraces all space and time,—nay, more, chaos and eternity,—with divine persons for the agents, and the redemption of the whole family of man for the subject, you can mix up the miserable persecution of a single race! And this is practical, not doctrinal, Christianity. It is not found in your Christian books, which were all written by Jews; it must have been made by some of those Churches to which you have referred me. Persecute us! Why, if you believe what you profess, you should kneel to us! You raise statues to the hero who saves a country. We have saved the human race, and you persecute us for doing it! Half Christendom worships a Jewess, and the other half a Jew. Now let me ask one more question: Which is the superior race, the worshipped or the worshippers?'

That Beaconsfield felt more than natural sympathy with his people and took a genuine pride in them, there can be no doubt, and as little that he favoured religious emancipation.

In 1847, Disraeli obtained the seat for Buckinghamshire, which he retained till his elevation to the peerage. In 1849, he succeeded his friend Lord George Bentinck in the leadership of the country party. In 1852 his genius landed that party in power, and the Chancellorship of the Exchequer was the post assigned to him in the Derby Cabinet. As Chancellor of the Exchequer he set himself to redeem his pledges in a Budget that satisfied neither friends nor enemies. It

was rejected. The faults and merits of the Budget were distinctively his own; but it contained a series of surprises, and Englishmen are slow to change their methods of transacting money matters. The Ministry was outvoted, but February, 1858, saw Disraeli again in power.

The resignation of Disraeli at the close of 1868 enabled him to pay a graceful tribute to one to whom he owed a debt of gratitude he was never slow to acknowledge. We have not heretofore mentioned his marriage, which took place in 1839. Mrs. Disraeli was the widow of Wyndham Lewis, Disraeli's former colleague in the representation of Maidstone. To the fortune she brought him, and to the influence she exercised on his character and career, he was in no small measure indebted for his brilliant success. The glorification of woman's influence in *Lothair* embodied his fortunate experiences, and the promise of conjugal sympathy in the union between Corisande and the hero had, notwithstanding the disparity in years, been fully realised by Disraeli in his long wedded life. He would not yet retire from the House where he had so long played a leading part, but the honours offered the retiring Minister were accepted for his wife, and Mrs. Disraeli was raised to the peerage by the style of Viscountess Beaconsfield.

In 1875, Disraeli found himself with a compact working majority in Parliament of more than fifty, and for the first time had a truly free hand. But with characteristic imperturbability, he declined to be hurried. As it happened, domestic measures were thrown into abeyance by the state of affairs in Europe and Asia. The Conservative chief found himself face to face with troubles that were to reopen the Eastern

question and shake the Ottoman Empire to its foundations. The position of England was difficult and embarrassing. Her navy was formidable, but the army, distributed all over the world, had sunk into insignificance compared with the armaments of Continental Powers. Moreover, she had been steadily losing influence abroad, if not deliberately effacing herself. Nothing showed more unpleasantly the slight regard in which she was held than the independent action of the 'Three Emperors,' when their chancellors decided on the terms of the Berlin Memorandum, merely telegraphing to the Western Powers for their approval.

Disraeli had determined from the first that England should play a part that became her, and should not only speak but be respected. But responsible politicians carried the advocacy of non-intervention to a point at which prudence became cowardice, and demagogues clamoured for peace at any price. Action that would have appeared inevitable to a Chatham or to Pitt was denounced as 'Imperialism.' The impression had been spreading on the Continent that nothing short of actual invasion would force England to fight, so that language of this kind was as dangerous as unseasonable. And the idea received slight official confirmation when a member of the Cabinet, at a most critical moment, falsely declared that England would never be guilty of another Crimean war.

It is probable that increasing popular indignation at the pretensions of Russia might have enabled Disraeli to override all opposition. Events proved that he had gauged the opinion of the nation. But then occurred those 'Bulgarian atrocities,' which brought

philanthropy into conflict with patriotism and evoked an outburst of indignation. Horrible as they were, they were exaggerated by sensational writers, and the nation was misinformed as to their origin. Beaconsfield's sagacity saved him from the trap which a Russian emissary had prepared with cold-blooded astuteness. From the first he never doubted that the rising which was so savagely suppressed had been provoked by foreign agents; and while Englishmen had their minds full of the misdeeds of the Turk, Beaconsfield kept his eye on St. Petersburg.

Disraeli's last utterances in the House of Commons were in August, 1875, when he was questioned upon Eastern affairs immediately before the close of the session. Next day came the news of his acceptance of the peerage which formerly he had declined for himself. Disraeli felt that his party could spare him (since his leadership had given them a commanding majority), and that he had well earned comparative repose in the calmer atmosphere of the House of Lords. There the brilliant debater and orator distinguished himself by reticence, and even his enemies admitted the dignified self-control which submitted in silence to misconstruction, and patiently waited for the justification of results. Few men could have been capable of such admirable self-restraint, and it was especially remarkable in Lord Beaconsfield, whose political credit was as the breath of his nostrils to him. The verdict of his countrymen could not have been flattering had he died while his policy seemed a failure.

Beaconsfield's increasing popularity showed the wisdom of the course he had pursued. The answer he had waited for came as the revised terms of the

Treaty of Berlin, and was received with enthusiasm. Meantime Russia had declared war, and, after many checks and much humiliating discomfiture, was threatening Erzeroum and advancing on Constantinople. Whether Lord Beaconsfield, had he been in the position of a Bismarck, would have openly sided with the Turks is doubtful. Had he done so, it is probable that the Russians would have halted; for it is certain that with English aid on the Danube the Turks could have anticipated the invasion of Roumania and changed the whole course of the war. But the presence of the English fleet in the Bosphorus imposed moderation on the Russians. It was a sign that England was ready to act, and the vote of the six million pounds for military preparations showed that England might repeat the Crimean war. The bringing of a contingent of the Indian army to Malta was a characteristic piece of policy; but it was promptly answered by the counterstroke which involved England in hostilities with Afghanistan. In the meantime, however, it had muzzled the Russian press, and no more was heard of privateers to be fitted out in American ports.

From the time the British squadron passed the Dardanelles, Lord Beaconsfield was forced forward into the position of champion of neutral Europe and the rights of nations. The independent foreign press unanimously approved his conduct; and though they wrote with selfish *arrière-pensée,* they expressed the dispassionate judgment of Europe. It was owing to Britain's vigilant watch over the negotiations that the exorbitant demands of the Treaty of San Stefano were submitted to the Congress of Berlin. The Prime Minister decided to represent England in person, with Lord Salisbury for his colleague, and nothing in his

long career flattered him more than the cordiality of his reception by the Germans.

Lord Beaconsfield was justified in saying that the Plenipotentiaries had brought back 'Peace with Honour'. The treaty restored to Turkey much valuable territory and did its best toward securing the independence of the detached provinces. The private convention with the Porte was of doubtful advantage, and gave a handle to those who declared it to be a salve to English vanity. As for the acquisition of Cyprus, it is difficult not to associate it with a passage in *Tancred*. The coincidence is curious. The passage runs: 'The English want Cyprus, and they will take it as compensation. . . . The English will not do the business of the Turks again for nothing.'

In 1877, the fruits of Disraeli's long study of the Indian problem were manifested in the 'scientific frontier' in the Northwest and in the establishment of imperial rule in India. The great Durbar of the same year evinced his innate appreciation of the workings of oriental minds. From that magnificent assemblage native rulers, attending in token of fealty as plain princes, came away kings, subject only to an Empress who addressed them through her Viceroy in such flattering terms as these:

'Ye are no conquered peoples, but are parts of this same Empire, in which with us ye stand shoulder by shoulder in the maintenance thereof.' To sentiment rather than the sword did Beaconsfield look (and rightly) for the integrity of Britain's vast Eastern domain.

Disraeli was magnificent as a debater. His lucidity of statement, brilliant fancy, and marvellous command of language, were astounding. Sarcasm and irony

were his natural weapons; he never showed to more advantage than when forced to use them in repelling a sudden attack. He had presence of mind, was seldom taken at a disadvantage, had great quickness of perception in detecting flaws in his adversaries' armour, while no man knew better the weak points in his own, or how best to cover them. Few statesmen ever addressed their protestations of patriotism and principle to more distrustful ears. What power he exercised was (during the greater part of his career) in opposition, and then it was chiefly critical or obstructive. While on the Treasury benches he had to conciliate the opposition of extreme Radicals. But the time arrived when he could actually direct the national policy. With a powerful Parliamentary majority, and the absolute confidence of his Sovereign, Lord Beaconsfield may be said to have swayed for some years the councils of Europe. It is by his sagacious use of that ascendancy that posterity will chiefly judge him.

THE NOVELS AND THEIR KEYS

Though eminent in politics, Disraeli made himself a lasting reputation as a novelist. A born statesman, his most vigorous tales take the shape of political manifestos; his women inspire his heroes to public careers and feats of oratory, and dismiss them from sighing at their feet to serve their country. He held a Parliamentary career to be the necessary culmination of an Englishman's life, and the only life worth living. All his men were men of thought, speculation,

or action. Like Vivian Grey, having nothing else to look to, they made ambition their profession, set their feet on the ladder before they had well left school, riveted their eyes on the highest rung, and used every human being they encountered as means to their end. Like Coningsby, sustained by powerful connections and influential friendships, they drank the cup of abnegation; and sacrificing wealth and commonplace prospects to independence, found themselves in possession of one and the other. Like the Young Duke, they vindicated their manhood by heroic effort when seemingly whelmed in temptations, tore themselves from the arms of sirens, and left the gaming-table to shake the senate. We might multiply parallel instances down to Lothair, who, well-nigh persuaded to discredit his Church by perversion, redeems the passing weakness by consecrating his life and fortune to her support.

The inevitable result of the tone and spirit of the novels was popularity. They were no mere stories of fashionable life, stories which none read more greedily than those hopelessly beneath the charmed circles. They identified themselves with the feelings and instincts of the high-born, the intellectual, and the ambitious. They were pictures of society, cleverly painted by a brilliant young artist drawing freely on his imagination, although we see the colouring gradually sober down, until at last come compositions from the life. Yet from the first there were the originality, lightness and sparkle which carry off any quantity of improbability. Few writers have succeeded better in hitting off a character in an epigram, or in making a speaking likeness of a caricature. Lord Beaconsfield was fond of seeking his models in well-known men,

reproducing them with a realism which was sometimes galling.

We have alluded to the political portraits in *Coningsby,* and there is still less illusion about the Byron and Shelley of *Venetia.* In *Lothair* his more cultivated judgment deals in compositions rather than photographs, and, with a single exception, the characters are more representative of the men than the men themselves. In the tale there is little or nothing of the satirist who relies on human weakness for his strongest effects. Rather have we the genial philosopher, who has come to see that there is good in everything and in most people.

Apart from the fascination possessed by his novels as romances pure and simple, or as gorgeous descriptions set in Oriental frames, barbaric in splendour, with the lights and shadows brushed-in with impressionistic fervour, most of Lord Beaconsfield's stories possess a lasting interest not shared save by the writings of one or two other authors of the Victorian period. This interest is contained in the Keys to the identities of the characters in several of his greatest novels. *Never before have these Keys been published in an edition of Beaconsfield's works;* in fact, never before, has an artistic and *definitive* edition of the writings of the great Jewish Statesman been attempted. The Keys given in the novels to which they refer were gathered from several sources by an experienced bibliographer, and were submitted to the criticism of the late Lord Rowton, who, as Montagu Corry, was Disraeli's private secretary for many years. It will be remembered that on the death of Lord Beaconsfield, it was to Mr. Corry (then recently created Lord Rowton) that the late Earl's papers were confided for the pur-

pose of making that official biography which, up to the present, unfortunately has not seen the light.

It is a matter of a common knowledge that Disraeli as a young man was socially intimate with the famous Lady Blessington, the friend of Count D'Orsay. We meet her in the pages of *Vivian Grey,* under the suggestive name of Lady Doubtful; while the peculiarities and attributes of such celebrated men as the Duke of Wellington, Prince Esterhazy, Prime Ministers Brougham and Canning, Count Metternich, and the poet Southey, are all pictured with realistic strokes under the guise of various characters who speak and move in the pages of this novel.

If the reader turns to *Coningsby,* the novel that pictures the "Young England" party, he will find, in the character of Millbank, Disraeli's life-long opponent, Gladstone, after O'Connell, the Liberator, the most outspoken of the Conservative chieftain's opponents. Gladstone often attacked Disraeli personally in the most scathing language, but was effectively silenced when, contrary to his custom, the Earl, at a Conservative banquet in Knightsbridge, answering Gladstone's latest denunciation, characterised his opponent, in a sentence that will live, as "an orator intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity." Under the peculiar title of Jawster Sharp appears John Bright—possibly the greatest orator of Disraeli's time. In fact, the Key to *Coningsby* includes all the characters prominent in the public eye between 1840 and 1850.

In *Venetia* no less distinguished literary personages than Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley are introduced, under the names of Cadurcis and Herbert, for which Disraeli was at the time scathingly criticised,

although he never admitted that he intended the portraits of Cadurcis and Herbert to represent the two poets.

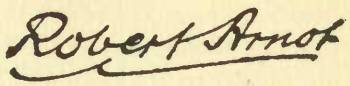
Coming down to *Lothair,* under the title of The Oxford Professor, one of Disraeli's surviving contemporaries, Professor Goldwin Smith, is portrayed, and his (to Disraeli) radically subversive opinions are brilliantly caricatured. Cardinal Manning, the first English Cardinal since the time of Pole, appears in the episode of Lothair's contemplated perversion; and in The Bishop, the celebrated Wilberforce ("Soapy Sam" of Oxford days) is recognised from the lifelike figure drawn by the author.

The Key to *Endymion* sparkles with a list of celebrities met with in no other novel by any author. Here move Napoleon III., Lord Palmerston, Prince Bismarck, Disraeli himself, Richard Cobden, Thackeray, Dickens, the Hon. Mrs. Norton, Queen Hortense, the Rothschilds, Lord Houghton (Richard Monckton Milnes), and even the editor of *Punch.*

Upon the Rothschilds, naturally, the love of splendour, both in mind and matter, that shone in Disraeli made him shower attributes and deeds that perhaps, if viewed in the glamour of romance, are not ill-bestowed upon that wonderful family.

To read such romances as these, with a Key to their characters at hand, is to see a moving picture-gallery of the Victorian period, drawn by one who, himself socially and politically intimate with those he represents, had opportunities for the depiction of character, incident, idiosyncrasy, and achievement, such as could be gained by no one else. Beaconsfield's novels may, without fear of contradiction, be said to contain much of the inner history of his era and of

the great men who helped to mould the destinies of England, from 1830 to 1881,—much, indeed, that no textbook of the time, political or otherwise, can ever afford. Each Key will be found immediately preceding the text of the novel to which it belongs.



KEY TO THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS IN VIVIAN GREY

Vivian Grey	Benjamin Disraeli
Marquess of Carabas	Marquess of Clanricarde
Mr. Foaming Fudge	Lord Brougham
Mr. Charlatan Gas	The Right Hon. George Canning
Colonel Delmington	Colonel Lowden
Lord Past Century	Earl of Eldon
Mr. Liberal Principles	Mr. Huskisson
Lord Alhambra	Lord Porchester
Ernest Clay	Sidney Gorst, Esq.
The Duke of Waterloo	Duke of Wellington
Prince Hungary	Prince Esterhazy
Mrs. Million	Mrs. Coutts
Lord Prima Donna	Lord William Lennox
Marchioness of Almacks	Marchioness of Londonderry
Liberal Snake	Mr. Macculloch
Lady Doubtful	Lady Blessington
Prince Xtmnpqrtosklw	Prince Gortschakoff
Stanislaus Hoax	Theodore Hook
Marquess of Grandgoût	Marquess of Herford
Mr. Stucco	Mr. Nash ("Beau Nash")
Mr. Justice St. Prose	Mr. Justice Parke
Vivacity Dull	Horace Twiss, Esq.
Duke of Juggernaut	Duke of Norfolk
Vivida Vis	J. Wilson Croker, Esq.
Lord Lowersdale	Lord Lonsdale
Lord Manfred	Lord Dudley
The Misses Otranto	The Misses Berry
Lady Madeline Trevor	Lady Churchill

Mr. Sherborne	Isaac Disraeli (father of the author)
Mr. Fitzloom	Sir Robert Peel
Prince of Little Lilliput	King Leopold of Belgium
Beckendorff	Count Metternich
Madame Carolina	Lady Holland
The Baroness	H. R. H. the Princess Amelia
Chief writer in "Attack-all Review"	Robert Southey
Julius von Aslingen	George Bryan ("Beau") Brummell
"Attack-all Review"	"Quarterly Review"
"Praise-all Review"	"Edinburgh Review"
Dr. Spittergen	Dr. Abernethy
Von Chronicle	M. de Sismondi (author of "Julia Severa")
Lord Amelius Fitzfudge Boroughby	Lord Burghersh
Colonel von Trumpeter	Marquis of Londonderry
Mrs. Felix Lorraine	Lady Caroline Lamb

VIVIAN GREY

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

A Spoiled Darling.

E ARE not aware that the infancy of Vivian Grey was distinguished by any extraordinary incident. The solicitude of the most affectionate of mothers, and the care of the most attentive of nurses, did their best to injure an excellent constitution. But Vivian was an only child, and these exertions were therefore excusable. For the first five years of his life, with his curly locks and his fancy dress, he was the pride of his own and the envy of all neighbouring establishments; but, in process of time, the spirit of boyism began to develop itself, and Vivian not only would brush his hair straight and rebel against his nurse, but actually insisted upon being —— breeched! At this crisis it was discovered that he had been spoiled, and it was determined that he should be sent to school. Mr. Grey observed, also, that the child was nearly ten years old, and did not know his alphabet,

and Mrs. Grey remarked that he was getting ugly. The fate of Vivian was decided.

'I am told, my dear,' observed Mrs. Grey, one day after dinner to her husband, 'I am told, my dear, that Dr. Flummery's would do very well for Vivian. Nothing can exceed the attention which is paid to the pupils. There are sixteen young ladies, all the daughters of clergymen, merely to attend to the morals and the linen; terms moderate: 100 guineas per annum, for all under six years of age, and few extras, only for fencing, pure milk, and the guitar. Mrs. Metcalfe has both her boys there, and she says their progress is astonishing! Percy Metcalfe, she assures me, was quite as backward as Vivian; indeed, backwarder; and so was Dudley, who was taught at home on the new system, by a pictorial alphabet, and who persisted to the last, notwithstanding all the exertions of Miss Barrett, in spelling A-P-E, monkey, merely because over the word there was a monster munching an apple.'

'And quite right in the child, my dear. Pictorial alphabet! pictorial fool's head!'

'But what do you say to Flummery's, Horace?'

'My dear, do what you like. I never trouble myself, you know, about these matters;' and Mr. Grey refreshed himself, after this domestic attack, with a glass of claret.

Mr. Grey was a gentleman who had succeeded, when the heat of youth was over, to the enjoyment of a life estate of some two thousand a-year. He was a man of lettered tastes, and had hailed with no slight pleasure his succession to a fortune which, though limited in its duration, was still a great thing for a young lounger about town, not only with no

profession, but with a mind unfitted for every species of business. Grey, to the astonishment of his former friends, the wits, made an excellent domestic match; and, leaving the whole management of his household to his lady, felt himself as independent in his magnificent library as if he had never ceased to be that true freeman, A MAN OF CHAMBERS.

The young Vivian had not, by the cares which fathers are always heirs to, yet reminded his parent that children were anything else but playthings. The intercourse between father and son was, of course, extremely limited; for Vivian was, as yet, the mother's child; Mr. Grey's parental duties being confined to giving his son a daily glass of claret, pulling his ears with all the awkwardness of literary affection, and trusting to God 'that the urchin would never scribble.'

'I won't go to school, mamma,' bawled Vivian.

'But you must, my love,' answered Mrs. Grey; 'all good boys go to school;' and in the plenitude of a mother's love she tried to make her offspring's hair curl.

'I won't have my hair curl, mamma; the boys will laugh at me,' rebawled the beauty.

'Now who could have told the child that?' monologised mamma, with all a mamma's admiration.

'Charles Appleyard told me so; his hair curled, and the boys called him girl. Papa! give me some more claret; I won't go to school.'

CHAPTER II.

Vivian Goes to School.

THREE or four years passed over, and the mind of Vivian Grey astonishingly developed itself. He had long ceased to wear frills, had broached the subject of boots three or four times, made a sad inroad during the holidays in Mr. Grey's bottle of claret, and was reported as having once sworn at the butler. The young gentleman began also to hint, during every vacation, that the fellows at Flummery's were somewhat too small for his companionship, and (first bud of puppyism!) the former advocate of straight hair now expended a portion of his infant income in the purchase of Macassar, and began to cultivate his curls. Mrs. Grey could not entertain for a moment the idea of her son's associating with children, the eldest of whom (to adopt his own account) was not above eight years old; so Flummery, it was determined, he should leave. But where to go? Mr. Grey was for Eton, but his lady was one of those women whom nothing in the world can persuade that a public school is anything else but a place where boys are roasted alive; and so with tears, and taunts, and supplications, the point of private education was conceded.

At length it was resolved that the only hope should remain at home a season, until some plan should be devised for the cultivation of his promising understanding. During this year Vivian became a somewhat more constant intruder into the library than heretofore; and living so much among books, he was insensibly attracted to those silent companions, that speak so eloquently.

How far the character of the parent may influence the character of the child, the metaphysician must decide. Certainly the character of Vivian Grey underwent, at this period of his life, a sensible change. Doubtless, constant communion with a mind highly refined, severely cultivated, and much experienced, cannot but produce a beneficial impression, even upon a mind formed and upon principles developed: how infinitely more powerful must the influence of such communion be upon a youthful heart, ardent, innocent, and unpractised! As Vivian was not to figure in the microcosm of a public school, a place for which, from his temper, he was almost better fitted than any young genius whom the playing fields of Eton or the hills of Winton can remember, there was some difficulty in fixing upon his future Academus. Mr. Grey's two axioms were, first, that no one so young as his son should settle in the metropolis, and that Vivian must consequently not have a private tutor; and, secondly, that all private schools were quite worthless; and, therefore, there was every probability of Vivian not receiving any education whatever.

At length, an exception to axiom second started up in the establishment of Mr. Dallas. This gentleman was a clergyman, a profound Grecian, and a poor man. He had edited the Alcestis, and married

his laundress; lost money by his edition, and his fellowship by his match. In a few days the hall of Mr. Grey's London mansion was filled with all sorts of portmanteaus, trunks, and travelling cases, directed in a boy's sprawling hand to 'Vivian Grey, Esquire, at the Reverend Everard Dallas, Burnsley Vicarage, Hants.'

'God bless you my boy! write to your mother soon, and remember your Journal.'

CHAPTER III.

How to Educate a Genius.

THE rumour of the arrival of 'a new fellow' circulated with rapidity through the inmates of Burnsley Vicarage, and about fifty young devils were preparing to quiz the new-comer, when the school-room door opened, and Mr. Dallas, accompanied by Vivian, entered.

'A dandy, by Jove!' whispered St. Leger Smith. 'What a knowing set out!' squeaked Johnson secundus. 'Mammy-sick!' growled Barlow primus. This last exclamation was, however, a scandalous libel, for certainly no being ever stood in a pedagogue's presence with more perfect *sang froid,* and with a bolder front, than did, at this moment, Vivian Grey.

One principle in Mr. Dallas's system was always to introduce a new-comer in school-hours. He was thus carried immediately *in medias res,* and the curiosity of his co-mates being in a great degree satisfied at the time when that curiosity could not personally annoy him, the new-comer was, of course, much better prepared to make his way when the absence of the ruler became a signal for some oral communication with 'the arrival.'

However, in the present instance the young savages at Burnsley Vicarage had caught a Tartar; and in a very few days Vivian Grey was decidedly the most popular fellow in the school. He was 'so dashing! so devilish good-tempered! so completely up to everything!' The magnates of the land were certainly rather jealous of his success, but their very sneers bore witness to his popularity. 'Cursed puppy,' whispered St. Leger Smith. 'Thinks himself knowing,' squeaked Johnson secundus. 'Thinks himself witty,' growled Barlow primus.

Notwithstanding this cabal, days rolled on at Burnsley Vicarage only to witness the increase of Vivian's popularity. Although more deficient than most of his own age in accurate classical attainments, he found himself, in talents and various acquirements, immeasurably their superior. And singular is it that at school distinction in such points is ten thousand times more admired by the multitude than the most profound knowledge of Greek Metres, or the most accurate acquaintance with the value of Roman coins. Vivian Grey's English verses and Vivian Grey's English themes were the subject of universal commendation. Some young lads made copies of these productions, to enrich, at the Christmas holidays, their sisters' albums; while the whole school were scribbling embryo prize-poems, epics of twenty lines on 'the Ruins of Pæstum' and 'the Temple of Minerva;' 'Agrigentum,' and 'the Cascade of Terni.' Vivian's productions at this time would probably have been rejected by the commonest twopenny publication about town, yet they turned the brain of the whole school; while fellows who were writing Latin Dissertations and Greek Odes, which might have made the

fortune of the Classical Journal, were looked on by the multitude as as great dunderheads as themselves. Such is the advantage which, even in this artificial world, everything that is genuine has over everything that is false and forced. The dunderheads who wrote 'good Latin' and 'Attic Greek' did it by a process by means of which the youngest fellow in the school was conscious he could, if he chose, attain the same perfection. Vivian Grey's verses were unlike anything which had yet appeared in the literary Annals of Burnsley Vicarage, and that which was quite novel was naturally thought quite excellent.

There is no place in the world where greater homage is paid to talent than an English school. At a public school, indeed, if a youth of great talents be blessed with an amiable and generous disposition, he ought not to envy the Minister of England. If any captain of Eton or præfect of Winchester be reading these pages, let him dispassionately consider in what situation of life he can rationally expect that it will be in his power to exercise such influence, to have such opportunities of obliging others, and be so confident of an affectionate and grateful return. Aye, there's the rub! Bitter thought! that gratitude should cease the moment we become men.

And sure I am that Vivian Grey was loved as ardently and as faithfully as you might expect from innocent young hearts. His slight accomplishments were the standard of all perfection, his sayings were the soul of all good fellowship, and his opinion the guide in any crisis which occurred in the monotonous existence of the little commonwealth. And time flew gaily on.

One winter evening, as Vivian, with some of his particular cronies, were standing round the schoolroom fire, they began, as all schoolboys do when it grows rather dark and they grow rather sentimental, to talk of HOME.

'Twelve weeks more,' said Augustus Etherege; 'twelve weeks more, and we are free! The glorious day should be celebrated.'

'A feast, a feast!' exclaimed Poynings.

'A feast is but the work of a night,' said Vivian Grey: 'something more stirring for me! What say you to private theatricals?'

The proposition was, of course, received with enthusiasm, and it was not until they had unanimously agreed to act that they universally remembered that acting was not allowed. And then they consulted whether they should ask Dallas, and then they remembered that Dallas had been asked fifty times, and then they 'supposed they must give it up;' and then Vivian Grey made a proposition which the rest were secretly sighing for, but which they were afraid to make themselves; he proposed that they should act without asking Dallas. 'Well, then, we'll do it without asking him,' said Vivian; 'nothing is allowed in this life, and everything is done: in town there is a thing called the French play, and that is not allowed, yet my aunt has got a private box there. Trust me for acting, but what shall we perform?'

This question was, as usual, the fruitful source of jarring opinions. One proposed Othello, chiefly because it would be so easy to black a face with a burnt cork. Another was for Hamlet, solely because he wanted to act the ghost, which he proposed do-

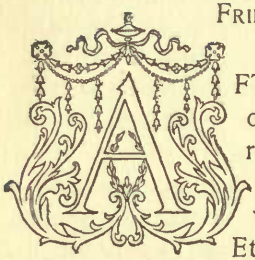
ing in white shorts and a night-cap. A third was for Julius Cæsar, because the murder scene would be such fun.

'No! no!' said Vivian, tired at these various and varying proposals, 'this will never do. Out upon Tragedies; let's have a Comedy!'

'A Comedy! a Comedy! oh! how delightful!'

CHAPTER IV.

Friends and Enemies.



FTER an immense number of propositions, and an equal number of repetitions, Dr. Hoadley's bustling drama was fixed upon. Vivian was to act Ranger, Augustus Etherege was to personate Clarinda, because he was a fair boy and always blushing, and the rest of the characters found able representatives. Every half-holiday was devoted to rehearsals, and nothing could exceed the amusement and thorough fun which all the preparations elicited. All went well; Vivian wrote a pathetic prologue and a witty epilogue. Etherege got on capitally in the mask scene, and Poynings was quite perfect in Jack Maggot. There was, of course, some difficulty in keeping all things in order, but then Vivian Grey was such an excellent manager! and then, with infinite tact, the said manager conciliated the Classics, for he allowed St. Leger Smith to select a Greek motto, from the Andromache, for the front of the theatre; and Johnson secundus and Barlow primus were complimented by being allowed to act the chairmen.

But alas! in the midst of all this sunshine, the seeds of discord and dissension were fast flourishing. Mr. Dallas himself was always so absorbed in some

freshly-imported German commentator that it was a fixed principle with him never to trouble himself with anything that concerned his pupils 'out of school hours.' The consequence was, that certain powers were necessarily delegated to a certain set of beings called USHERS.

The usherian rule had, however, always been comparatively light at Burnsley Vicarage, for the good Dallas, never for a moment entrusting the duties of tuition to a third person, engaged these deputies merely as a sort of police, to regulate the bodies, rather than the minds, of his youthful subjects. One of the first principles of the new theory introduced into the establishment of Burnsley Vicarage by Mr. Vivian Grey was, that the ushers were to be considered by the boys as a species of upper servants, were to be treated with civility, certainly, as all servants are by gentlemen; but that no further attention was to be paid them, and that any fellow voluntarily conversing with an usher was to be cut dead by the whole school. This pleasant arrangement was no secret to those whom it most immediately concerned, and, of course, rendered Vivian rather a favourite with them. These men had not the tact to conciliate the boy, and were, notwithstanding, too much afraid of his influence in the school to attack him openly; so they waited with that patience which insulted beings can alone endure.

One of these creatures must not be forgotten; his name was Mallett; he was a perfect specimen of the genuine usher. The monster wore a black coat and waistcoat; the residue of his costume was of that mysterious colour known by the name of pepper-and-salt. He was a pallid wretch with a pug nose, white

teeth, and marked with the small-pox: long, greasy, black hair, and small black, beady eyes. This dæmon watched the progress of the theatrical company with eyes gloating with vengeance. No attempt had been made to keep the fact of the rehearsal a secret from the police; no objection, on their part, had as yet been made; the twelve weeks diminished to six; Ranger had secretly ordered a dress from town, and was to get a steel-handled sword from Fentum's for Jack Maggot; and everything was proceeding with delightful success, when one morning, as Mr. Dallas was apparently about to take his departure, with a volume of Becker's Thucydides under his arm, the respected Dominie stopped, and thus harangued: 'I am informed that a great deal is going on in this family with which it is intended that I shall be kept unacquainted. It is not my intention to name anybody or anything at present; but I must say that of late the temper of this family has sadly changed. Whether there be any seditious stranger among you or not, I shall not at present even endeavour to discover; but I will warn my old friends of their new ones:' and so saying, the Dominie withdrew.

All eyes were immediately fixed on Vivian, and the faces of the Classics were triumphant with smiles; those of the manager's particular friends, the Romantics, we may call them, were clouded; but who shall describe the countenance of Mallett? In a moment the school broke up with an agitated and tumultuous uproar. 'No stranger!' shouted St. Leger Smith; 'no stranger!' vociferated a prepared gang. Vivian's friends were silent, for they hesitated to accept for their leader the insulting title. Those who were neither Vivian's friends nor in the secret, weak crea-

tures who side always with the strongest, immediately swelled the insulting chorus of Mr. St. Leger Smith. That worthy, emboldened by his success and the smiles of Mallett, contained himself no longer: 'Down with the manager!' he cried. His satellites chorussed. But now Vivian rushed forward. 'Mr. Smith, I thank you for being so definite; take that!' and he struck Smith with such force that the Cleon staggered and fell; but Smith instantly recovered, and a ring was instantly formed. To a common observer, the combatants were unequally matched; for Smith was a burly, big-limbed animal, alike superior to Grey in years and strength. But Vivian, though delicate in frame and more youthful, was full his match in spirit, and, thanks to being a Cockney! ten times his match in science. He had not built a white great coat or drunk blue ruin at Ben Burn's for nothing!

Oh! how beautifully he fought! how admirably straight he hit! and his stops quick as lightning! and his followings up confounding his adversary with their painful celerity! Smith, alike puzzled and punished, yet proud in his strength, hit round, and wild, and false, and foamed like a furious elephant. For ten successive rounds the result was dubious; but in the eleventh the strength of Smith began to fail him, and the men were more fairly matched. 'Go it, Ranger! go it, Ranger!' halloed the Greyites; 'No stranger! no stranger!' eagerly bawled the more numerous party. 'Smith's floored, by Jove!' exclaimed Poynings, who was Grey's second. 'At it again! at it again!' exclaimed all. And now, when Smith must certainly have given in, suddenly stepped forward Mr. Mallett, accompanied by —— Dallas!

'How, Mr. Grey! No answer, sir; I understand that you have always an answer ready. I do not quote Scripture lightly, Mr. Grey; but "Take heed that you offend not, even with your tongue." Now, sir, to your room.'

When Vivian Grey again joined his companions, he found himself almost universally shunned. Etherege and Poynings were the only individuals who met him with their former frankness. 'A horrible row, Grey,' said the latter. 'After you went, the Doctor harangued the whole school, and swears you have seduced and ruined us all; everything was happiness until you came, &c. Mallett is of course at the bottom of the whole business: but what can we do? Dallas says you have the tongue of a serpent, and that he will not trust himself to hear your defence. Infamous shame! I swear! And now every fellow has got a story against you: some say you are a dandy, others want to know whether the next piece performed at your theatre will be "The Stranger;" as for myself and Etherege, we shall leave in a few weeks, and it does not signify to us; but what the devil you're to do next half, by Jove, I can't say. If I were you, I would not return.'

'Not return, eh! but that will I, though; and we shall see who, in future, can complain of the sweetness of my voice! Ungrateful fools!'

CHAPTER V.

A Sweet Revenge.

HE Vacation was over, and Vivian returned to Burnsley Vicarage. He bowed cavalierly to Mr. Dallas on his arrival, and immediately sauntered up into the school-room, where he found a tolerable quantity of wretches looking as miserable as schoolboys who have left their pleasant homes generally do for some four-and-twenty hours. 'How d'ye do, Grey? How d'ye do, Grey?' burst from a knot of unhappy fellows, who would have felt quite delighted had their newly arrived co-mate condescended to entertain them, as usual, with some capital good story fresh from town. But they were disappointed.

'We can make room for you at the fire, Grey,' said Theophilus King.

'I thank you, I am not cold.'

'I suppose you know that Poynings and Etherege don't come back, Grey?'

'Everybody knew that last half:' and so he walked on.

'Grey, Grey!' halloed King, 'don't go into the dining-room; Mallett is there alone, and told us not to disturb him. By Jove, the fellow is going in:

there will be a greater row this half between Grey and Mallett than ever.'

Days, the heavy first days of the half, rolled on, and all the citizens of the little commonwealth had returned.

'What a dull half this will be!' said Eardley; 'how one misses Grey's set! After all, they kept the school alive: Poynings was a first-rate fellow, and Etherege so deuced good-natured! I wonder whom Grey will crony with this half; have you seen him and Dallas speak together yet? He cut the Doctor quite dead at Greek to-day.'

'Why, Eardley! Eardley! there is Grey walking round playing fields with Mallett!' halloed a sawney who was killing the half-holiday by looking out of the window.

'The devil! I say, Matthews, whose flute is that? It is a devilish handsome one!'

'It's Grey's! I clean it for him,' squeaked a little boy. 'He gives me sixpence a-week!'

'Oh, you sneak!' said one.

'Cut him over!' said another.

'Roast him!' cried a third.

'To whom are you going to take the flute?' asked a fourth.

'To Mallett,' squeaked the little fellow. 'Grey lends his flute to Mallett every day.'

'Grey lends his flute to Mallett! The deuce he does! So Grey and Mallett are going to crony!'

A wild exclamation burst forth from the little party; and away each of them ran, to spread in all directions the astounding intelligence.

If the rule of the ushers had hitherto been light at Burnsley Vicarage, its character was materially changed

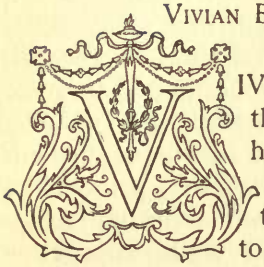
during this half-year. The vexatious and tyrannical influence of Mallett was now experienced in all directions, meeting and interfering with the comforts of the boys in every possible manner. His malice was accompanied, too, by a tact which could not have been expected from his vulgar mind, and which, at the same time, could not have been produced by the experience of one in his situation. It was quite evident to the whole community that his conduct was dictated by another mind, and that that mind was one versed in all the secrets of a school-boy's life, and acquainted with all the workings of a school-boy's mind: a species of knowledge which no pedagogue in the world ever yet attained. There was no difficulty in discovering whose was the power behind the throne. Vivian Grey was the perpetual companion of Mallett in his walks, and even in the school; he shunned also the converse of every one of the boys, and did not affect to conceal that his quarrel was universal. Superior power, exercised by a superior mind, was for a long time more than a match even for the united exertions of the whole school. If any one complained, Mallett's written answer (and such Dallas always required) was immediately ready, explaining everything in the most satisfactory manner, and refuting every complaint with the most triumphant spirit. Dallas, of course, supported his deputy, and was soon equally detested. This tyranny had continued through a great part of the long half-year, and the spirit of the school was almost broken, when a fresh outrage occurred, of such a nature that the nearly enslaved multitude conspired.

The plot was admirably formed. On the first bell ringing for school, the door was to be immediately

barred, to prevent the entrance of Dallas. Instant vengeance was then to be taken on Mallett and his companion—the sneak! the spy! the traitor! The bell rang: the door was barred: four stout fellows seized on Mallett, four rushed to Vivian Grey: but stop: he sprang upon his desk, and, placing his back against the wall, held a pistol at the foremost: 'Not an inch nearer, Smith, or I fire. Let me not, however, baulk your vengeance on yonder hound: if I could suggest any refinements in torture, they would be at your service.' Vivian Grey smiled, while the horrid cries of Mallett indicated that the boys were 'roasting' him. He then walked to the door and admitted the barred-out Dominie. Silence was restored. There was an explanation and no defence; and Vivian Grey was expelled.

CHAPTER VI.

Vivian Becomes a Platonist.



IVIAN was now seventeen; and the system of private education having so decidedly failed, it was resolved that he should spend the years antecedent to his going to Oxford at home. Nothing could be a greater failure than the first weeks of his 'course of study.' He was perpetually violating the sanctity of the drawing-room by the presence of Scapulas and Hederics, and outraging the propriety of morning visitors by bursting into his mother's boudoir with lexicons and slippers.

'Vivian, my dear,' said his father to him one day, 'this will never do; you must adopt some system for your studies, and some locality for your reading. Have a room to yourself; set apart certain hours in the day for your books, and allow no consideration on earth to influence you to violate their sacredness; and above all, my dear boy, keep your papers in order. I find a dissertation on "The Commerce of Carthage" stuck in my large paper copy of "Dibdin's Decameron," and an "Essay on the Metaphysics of Music" (pray, my dear fellow, beware of magazine scribbling) cracking the back of Montfaucon's "Monarchie."'

Vivian apologised, promised, protested, and finally sat down 'TO READ.' He had laid the foundations of accurate classical knowledge under the tuition of the learned Dallas; and twelve hours a day and self-banishment from society overcame, in twelve months, the ill effects of his imperfect education. The result of this extraordinary exertion may be conceived. At the end of twelve months, Vivian, like many other young enthusiasts, had discovered that all the wit and wisdom of the world were concentrated in some fifty antique volumes, and he treated the unlucky moderns with the most sublime spirit of hauteur imaginable. A chorus in the Medea, that painted the radiant sky of Attica, disgusted him with the foggy atmosphere of Great Britain; and while Mrs. Grey was meditating a visit to Brighton, her son was dreaming of the gulf of Salamis. The spectre in the Persæ was his only model for a ghost, and the furies in the Orestes were his perfection of tragical machinery.

Most ingenious and educated youths have fallen into the same error, but few have ever carried such feelings to the excess that Vivian Grey did; for while his mind was daily becoming more enervated under the beautiful but baneful influence of Classic Reverie, the youth lighted upon PLATO.

Wonderful is it that while the whole soul of Vivian Grey seemed concentrated and wrapped in the glorious pages of the Athenian; while, with keen and almost inspired curiosity, he searched, and followed up, and meditated upon, the definite mystery, the indefinite development; while his spirit alternately bowed in trembling and in admiration, as he seemed to be listening to the secrets of the Universe revealed

in the glorious melodies of an immortal voice; wonderful is it, I say, that the writer, the study of whose works appeared to the young scholar, in the revelling of his enthusiasm, to be the sole object for which man was born and had his being, was the cause by which Vivian Grey was saved from being all his life a dreaming scholar.

Determined to spare no exertions, and to neglect no means, by which he might enter into the very penetralia of his mighty master's meaning, Vivian determined to attack the latter Platonists. These were a race of men, of whose existence he knew merely by the references to their productions which were sprinkled in the commentaries of his 'best editions.' In the pride of boyish learning, Vivian had limited his library to Classics, and the proud leaders of the later schools did not consequently grace his diminutive bookcase. In this dilemma he flew to his father, and confessed by his request that his favourites were not all-sufficient.

'Father! I wish to make myself master of the latter Platonists. I want Plotinus, and Porphyry, and Iamblichus, and Syrirnus, and Maximus Tyrius, and Proclus, and Hierocles, and Sallustius, and Damascius.'

Mr. Grey stared at his son, and laughed.

'My dear Vivian! are you quite convinced that the authors you ask for are all pure Platonists? or have not some of them placed the great end rather in practical than theoretic virtue, and thereby violated the first principles of your master? which would be shocking. Are you sure, too, that these gentlemen have actually "withdrawn the sacred veil, which covers from profane eyes the luminous spectacles?" Are you quite convinced that every one of these worthies lived

at least five hundred years after the great master? for I need not tell so profound a Platonist as yourself that it was not till that period that even glimpses of the great master's meaning were discovered. Strange! that TIME should alike favour the philosophy of theory and the philosophy of facts. Mr. Vivian Grey, benefiting, I presume, by the lapse of further centuries, is about to complete the great work which Proclus and Porphyry commenced.'

'My dear sir! you are pleased to be amusing this morning.'

'My dear boy! I smiled, but not with joy. Sit down, and let us have a little conversation together. Father and son, and father and son on such terms as we are, should really communicate oftener together than we do. It has been, perhaps, my fault; it shall not be so again.'

'My dear sir!'

'Nay, nay, it shall be my fault now. Whose it shall be in future, Vivian, time will show. My dear Vivian, you have now spent upwards of a year under this roof, and your conduct has been as correct as the most rigid parent might require. I have not wished to interfere with the progress of your mind, and I regret it. I have been negligent, but not wilfully so. I do regret it; because, whatever may be your powers, Vivian, I at least have the advantage of experience. I see you smile at a word which I so often use. Well, well, were I to talk to you for ever, you would not understand what I mean by that single word. The time will come when you will deem that single word everything. Ardent youths in their closets, Vivian, too often fancy that they are peculiar beings; and I have no reason to believe that you are

an exception to the general rule. In passing one whole year of your life, as you have done, you doubtless imagine that you have been spending your hours in a manner which no others have done before. Trust me, my boy, thousands have done the same; and, what is of still more importance, thousands are doing, and will do, the same. Take the advice of one who has committed as many, ay more, follies than yourself; but who would bless the hour that he had been a fool if his experience might be of benefit to his beloved son.'

'My father!'

'Nay, don't agitate yourself; we are consulting together. Let us see what is to be done. Try to ascertain, when you are alone, what may be the chief objects of your existence in this world. I want you to take no theological dogmas for granted, nor to satisfy your doubts by ceasing to think; but, whether we are in this world in a state of probation for another, or whether we cease altogether when we cease to breathe, human feelings tell me that we have some duties to perform; to our fellow creatures, to our friends, to ourselves. Pray tell me, my dear boy, what possible good your perusal of the latter Platonists can produce to either of these three interests? I trust that my child is not one of those who look with a glazed eye on the welfare of their fellow-men, and who would dream away an useless life by idle puzzles of the brain; creatures who consider their existence as an unprofitable mystery, and yet are afraid to die. You will find Plotinus in the fourth shelf of the next room, Vivian.'

CHAPTER VII.

Youthful Ambition.

IN ENGLAND, personal distinction is the only passport to the society of the great. Whether this distinction arise from fortune, family, or talent, is immaterial; but certain it is, to enter into high society a man must either have blood, a million, or a genius.

The reputation of Mr. Grey had always made him an honoured guest among the powerful and the great. It was for this reason that he had always been anxious that his son should be at home as little as possible; for he feared for a youth the fascination of London society. Although busied with his studies, and professing 'not to visit,' Vivian could not avoid occasionally finding himself in company in which boys should never be seen; and, what was still worse, from a certain social spirit, an indefinable tact with which Nature had endowed him, this boy of nineteen began to think this society delightful. Most persons of his age would have passed through the ordeal with perfect safety; they would have entered certain rooms, at certain hours, with stiff cravats, and Nugee coats, and black velvet waistcoats; and after having annoyed all those who condescended to know of their existence,

with their red hands and their white gloves, they would have retired to a corner of the room, and conversationised with any stray four-year-older not yet sent to bed.

But Vivian Grey was a graceful, lively lad, with just enough of dandyism to preserve him from committing gaucheries, and with a devil of a tongue. All men will agree with me that the only rival to be feared by a man of spirit is a clever boy. What makes them so popular with women it is difficult to explain; however, Lady Julia Knighton, and Mrs. Frank Delmington, and half a score of dames of fashion, were always patronising our hero, who found an evening spent in their society not altogether dull, for there is no fascination so irresistible to a boy as the smile of a married woman. Vivian had passed such a recluse life for the last two years and a half, that he had quite forgotten that he was once considered an agreeable fellow; and so, determined to discover what right he ever had to such a reputation, he dashed into all these amourettes in beautiful style.

But Vivian Grey was a young and tender plant in a moral hothouse. His character was developing itself too soon. Although his evenings were now generally passed in the manner we have alluded to, this boy was, during the rest of the day, a hard and indefatigable student; and having now got through an immense series of historical reading, he had stumbled upon a branch of study certainly the most delightful in the world; but, for a boy, as certainly the most perilous, THE STUDY OF POLITICS.

And now everything was solved, the inexplicable longings of his soul, which had so often perplexed him, were at length explained. The want, the inde-

finable want, which he had so constantly experienced, was at last supplied; the grand object on which to bring the powers of his mind to bear and work was at last provided. He paced his chamber in an agitated spirit, and panted for the Senate.

It may be asked, what was the evil of all this? and the reader will, perhaps, murmur something about an honourable spirit and youthful ambition. The evil was great. The time drew nigh for Vivian to leave his home for Oxford, that is, for him to commence his long preparation for entering on his career in life. And now this person, who was about to be a pupil, this stripling, who was going to begin his education, had all the desires of a matured mind, of an experienced man, but without maturity and without experience. He was already a cunning reader of human hearts; and felt conscious that his was a tongue which was born to guide human beings. The idea of Oxford to such an individual was an insult!

CHAPTER VIII.

The 'Grand Discovery.'

WE MUST endeavor to trace, if possible, more accurately the workings of Vivian Grey's mind at this period of his existence. In the plenitude of his ambition, he stopped one day to enquire in what manner he could obtain his magnificent ends.

'The Bar: pooh! law and bad jokes till we are forty; and then, with the most brilliant success, the prospect of gout and a coronet. Besides, to succeed as an advocate, I must be a great lawyer; and to be a great lawyer, I must give up my chance of being a great man. The Services in war time are fit only for desperadoes (and that truly am I); but, in peace, are fit only for fools. The Church is more rational. Let me see: I should certainly like to act Wolsey; but the thousand and one chances against me! And truly I feel my destiny should not be on a chance. Were I a son of a millionaire, or a noble, I might have all. Curse on my lot! that the want of a few rascal counters, and the possession of a little rascal blood, should mar my fortunes!'

Such was the general tenor of Vivian's thoughts, until, musing himself almost into madness, he at last made, as he conceived, the Grand Discovery. Riches

and Power, says the Economist; and is not Intellect? asks the Philosopher. And yet, while the influence of the millionaire is instantly felt in all classes of society, how is it that 'Noble Mind' so often leaves us unknown and unhonoured? Why have there been statesmen who have never ruled, and heroes who have never conquered? Why have glorious philosophers died in a garret? and why have there been poets whose only admirer has been Nature in her echoes? It must be that these beings have thought only of themselves, and, constant and elaborate students of their own glorious natures, have forgotten or disdained the study of all others. Yes! we must mix with the herd; we must enter into their feelings; we must humour their weaknesses; we must sympathise with the sorrows that we do not feel; and share the merriment of fools. Oh, yes! to rule men, we must be men; to prove that we are strong, we must be weak; to prove that we are giants, we must be dwarfs; even as the Eastern Genie was hid in the charmed bottle. Our wisdom must be concealed under folly, and our constancy under caprice.

'I have been often struck by the ancient tales of Jupiter's visits to the earth. In these fanciful adventures, the god bore no indication of the Thunderer's glory; but was a man of low estate, a herdsman, a hind, often even an animal. A mighty spirit has in Tradition, Time's great moralist, perused "the wisdom of the ancients." Even in the same spirit, I would explain Jove's terrestrial visitings. For, to govern man, even the god appeared to feel as a man; and sometimes as a beast, was apparently influenced by their vilest passions. Mankind, then, is my great game.

'At this moment, how many a powerful noble wants only wit to be a Minister; and what wants Vivian Grey to attain the same end? That noble's influence. When two persons can so materially assist each other, why are they not brought together? Shall I, because my birth baulks my fancy, shall I pass my life a moping misanthrope in an old château? Supposing I am in contact with this magnifico, am I prepared? Now, let me probe my very soul. Does my cheek blanch? I have the mind for the conception; and I can perform right skilfully upon the most splendid of musical instruments, the human voice, to make those conceptions beloved by others. There wants but one thing more: courage, pure, perfect courage; and does Vivian Grey know fear?' He laughed an answer of bitterest derision.

CHAPTER IX.

Parental Platitudes.

IS IT surprising that Vivian Grey, with a mind teeming with such feelings, should view the approach of the season for his departure to Oxford with sentiments of disgust? After hours of bitter meditation, he sought his father; he made him acquainted with his feelings, but concealed from him his actual views, and dwelt on the misery of being thrown back in life, at a period when society seemed instinct with a spirit peculiarly active, and when so many openings were daily offered to the adventurous and the bold.

'Vivian,' said Mr. Grey, beware of endeavouring to become a great man in a hurry. One such attempt in ten thousand may succeed: these are fearful odds. Admirer as you are of Lord Bacon, you may perhaps remember a certain parable of his, called "Memnon, or a youth too forward." I hope you are not going to be one of those sons of Aurora, "who, puffed up with the glittering show of vanity and ostentation, attempt actions above their strength."

'You talk to me about the peculiarly active spirit of society; if the spirit of society be so peculiarly

active, Mr. Vivian Grey should beware lest it outstrip him. Is neglecting to mature your mind, my boy, exactly the way to win the race? This is an age of unsettled opinions and contested principles; in the very measures of our administration, the speculative spirit of the present day is, to say the least, not impalpable. Nay, don't start, my dear fellow, and look the very Prosopopeia of Political Economy! I know exactly what you are going to say; but, if you please, we will leave Turgot and Galileo to Mr. Canning and the House of Commons, or your Cousin Hargrave and his Debating Society. However, jesting apart, get your hat, and walk with me as far as Evan's, where I have promised to look in, to see the Mazarin Bible, and we will talk this affair over as we go along.

'I am no bigot, you know, Vivian. I am not one of those who wish to oppose the application of refined philosophy to the common business of life. We are, I hope, an improving race; there is room, I am sure, for great improvement, and the perfectibility of man is certainly a pretty dream. (How well that Union Club House comes out now, since they have made the opening); but, although we may have steam kitchens, human nature is, I imagine, much the same this moment that we are walking in Pall Mall East, as it was some thousand years ago, when as wise men were walking on the banks of the Ilyssus. When our moral powers increase in proportion to our physical ones, then huzza for the perfectibility of man! and respectable, idle loungers like you and me, Vivian, may then have a chance of walking in the streets of London without having their heels trodden upon, a ceremony which I have this

moment undergone. In the present day we are all studying science, and none of us are studying ourselves. This is not exactly the Socratic process; and as for the γνωθι σεαυτον of the more ancient Athenian, that principle is quite out of fashion in the nineteenth century (I believe that's the phrase). Self is the only person whom we know nothing about.

'But, my dear Vivian, as to the immediate point of our consideration. In my library, uninfluenced and uncontrolled by passion or by party, I cannot but see that it is utterly impossible that all that we are wishing and striving for can take place without some, without much evil. In ten years' time, perhaps, or less, the fever will have subsided, and in ten years' time, or less, your intellect will be matured. Now, my good sir, instead of talking about the active spirit of the age, and the opportunities offered to the adventurous and the bold, ought you not rather to congratulate yourself that a great change is effecting at a period of your life when you need not, individually, be subjected to the possibility of being injured by its operation; and when you are preparing your mind to take advantage of the system, when that system is matured and organised?

'As to your request, it assuredly is one of the most modest, and the most rational, that I have lately been favoured with. Although I would much rather that any influence which I may exercise over your mind, should be the effect of my advice as your friend than of my authority as your father; still I really feel it my duty, parentally, to protest against this crude proposition of yours. However, if you choose to lose a term or two, do. Don't blame me, you know, if afterwards you repent it.'

Here dashed by the gorgeous equipage of Mrs. Ormolu, the wife of a man who was working all the gold and silver mines in Christendom. 'Ah! my dear Vivian,' said Mr. Grey, 'it is this which has turned all your brains. In this age every one is striving to make an immense fortune, and what is most terrific, at the same time a speedy one. This thirst for sudden wealth it is which engenders the extravagant conceptions, and fosters that wild spirit of speculation which is now stalking abroad; and which, like the Dæmon in Frankenstein, not only fearfully wanders over the whole wide face of nature, but grins in the imagined solitude of our secret chambers. Oh! my son, it is for the young men of the present day that I tremble; seduced by the temporary success of a few children of fortune, I observe that their minds recoil from the prospects which are held forth by the ordinary, and, mark me, by the only modes of acquiring property, fair trade, and honourable professions. It is for you and your companions that I fear. God grant that there may not be a moral as well as a political disorganisation! God grant that our youth, the hope of our state, may not be lost to us! For, oh! my son, the wisest has said, "He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." Let us step into Clarke's and take an ice.'

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

The House of Carabas.

THE Marquess of Carabas started in life as the cadet of a noble family. The earl, his father, like the woodman in the fairy tale, was blessed with three sons: the first was an idiot, and was destined for the Coronet; the second was a man of business, and was educated for the Commons; the third was a roué, and was shipped to the Colonies.

The present Marquess, then the Honourable Sidney Lorraine, prospered in his political career. He was servile, and pompous, and indefatigable, and loquacious, so whispered the world: his friends hailed him as, at once, a courtier and a sage, a man of business and an orator. After revelling in his fair proportion of commissionerships, and under-secretaryships, and the rest of the milk and honey of the political Canaan, the apex of the pyramid of his ambition was at length visible, for Sidney Lorraine became President of a Board, and wriggled into the adytum of the cabinet.

At this moment his idiot brother died To compensate for his loss of office, and to secure his votes,

the Earl of Carabas was promoted in the peerage, and was presented with some magnificent office, meaning nothing; swelling with dignity, and void of duties. As years rolled on, various changes took place in the administration, of which his Lordship was once a component part; and the ministry, to their surprise, getting popular, found that the command of the Carabas interest was not of such vital importance to them as heretofore, and so his Lordship was voted a bore, and got shelved. Not that his Lordship was bereaved of his splendid office, or that anything occurred, indeed, by which the uninitiated might have been led to suppose that the beams of his Lordship's consequence were shorn; but the Marquess's secret applications at the Treasury were no longer listened to, and pert under-secretaries settled their cravats, and whispered 'that the Carabas interest was gone by.'

The noble Marquess was not insensible to his situation, for he was what the world calls ambitious; but the vigour of his faculties had vanished beneath the united influence of years and indolence and ill-humour; for his Lordship, to avoid ennui, had quarrelled with his son, and then, having lost his only friend, had quarrelled with himself.

Such was the distinguished individual who graced, one day at the latter end of the season of 18—, the classic board of Horace Grey, Esquire. The reader will, perhaps, be astonished, that such a man as his Lordship should be the guest of such a man as our hero's father; but the truth is, the Marquess of Carabas had just been disappointed in an attempt on the chair of the President of the Royal Society, which, for want of something better to do, he was ambitious

of filling, and this was a conciliatory visit to one of the most distinguished members of that body, and one who had voted against him with particular enthusiasm. The Marquess, still a politician, was now, as he imagined, securing his host's vote for a future St. Andrew's day.

The cuisine of Mr. Grey was superb; for although an enthusiastic advocate for the cultivation of the mind, he was an equally ardent supporter of the cultivation of the body. Indeed, the necessary dependence of the sanity of the one on the good keeping of the other, was one of his favourite theories, and one which, this day, he was supporting with pleasant and facetious reasoning. His Lordship was delighted with his new friend, and still more delighted with his new friend's theory. The Marquess himself was, indeed, quite of the same opinion as Mr. Grey; for he never made a speech without previously taking a sandwich, and would have sunk under the estimates a thousand times, had it not been for the juicy friendship of the fruit of Portugal.

The guests were not numerous. A regius professor of Greek; an officer just escaped from Sockatoo; a man of science, and two M.P.'s with his Lordship; the host, and Mr. Vivian Grey, constituted the party. Oh, no! there were two others. There was a Mr. John Brown, a fashionable poet, and who, ashamed of his own name, published his melodies under the more euphonious and romantic title of 'Clarence Devonshire,' and there was a Mr. Thomas Smith, a fashionable novelist; that is to say, a person who occasionally publishes three volumes, one half of which contain the adventures of a young gentleman in the country, and the other volume and a half the adventures of

the same young gentleman in the metropolis; a sort of writer, whose constant tattle about beer and billiards, and eating soup, and the horribility of 'committing' puns, give truly an admirable and accurate idea of the conversation of the refined society of the refined metropolis of Great Britain. These two last gentlemen were 'pets' of Mrs. Grey.

The conversation may be conceived. Each person was of course prepared with a certain quota of information, without which no man in London is morally entitled to dine out; and when the quota was expended, the amiable host took the burthen upon his own shoulders, and endeavoured, as the phrase goes, to draw out his guests.

O London dinners! empty artificial nothings! and that beings can be found, and those too the flower of the land, who, day after day, can act the same parts in the same dull, dreary farce! The officer had discoursed sufficiently about 'his intimate friend, the Soudan,' and about the chain armour of the Sockatoo cuirassiers; and one of the M.P.'s, who was in the Guards, had been defeated in a ridiculous attempt to prove that the breast-plates of the household troops of Great Britain were superior to those of the household troops of Timtomtoo. Mrs. Grey, to whose opinion both parties deferred, gave it in favour of the Soudan. And the man of science had lectured about a machine which might destroy fifteen square feet of human beings in a second, and yet be carried in the waistcoat pocket. And the classic, who, for a professor, was quite a man of the world, had the latest news of the new Herculaneum process, and was of opinion that, if they could but succeed in unrolling a certain suspicious-looking scroll, we might be so fortunate as

to possess a minute treatise on &c., &c., &c. In short, all had said their say. There was a dead pause, and Mrs. Grey looked at her husband and rose.

How singular it is, that when this move takes place every one appears to be relieved, and yet every one of any experience must be quite aware that the dead bore work is only about to commence. Howbeit, all filled their glasses, and the peer, at the top of the table, began to talk politics. I am sure I cannot tell what the weighty subject was that was broached by the ex-minister; for I did not dine with Grey that day; and had I done so, I should have been equally ignorant, for I am a dull man, and always sleep at dinner. However, the subject was political, the claret flew round, and a stormy argument commenced. The Marquess was decidedly wrong, and was sadly badgered by the civil M.P. and the professor. The host, who was of no party, supported his guest as long as possible, and then left him to his fate. The military M.P. fled to the drawing-room to philander with Mrs. Grey; and the man of science and the African had already retired to the intellectual idiocy of a May Fair 'At Home.' The novelist was silent, for he was studying a scene; and the poet was absent, for he was musing a sonnet.

The Marquess refuted, had recourse to contradiction, and was too acute a man to be insensible to the forlornness of his situation; when at this moment, a voice proceeded from the end of the table, from a young gentleman, who had hitherto preserved a profound silence, but whose silence, if the company were to have judged from the tones of his voice, and the matter of his communication, did not altogether

proceed from a want of confidence in his own abilities. 'In my opinion,' said Mr. Vivian Grey, as he sat lounging in his father's vacated seat, 'in my opinion his Lordship has been misunderstood; and it is, as is generally the case, from a slight verbal misconception in the commencement of this argument, that the whole of this difference arises.'

The eyes of the Marquess sparkled, and the mouth of the Marquess was closed. His Lordship was delighted that his reputation might yet be saved; but as he was not perfectly acquainted in what manner that salvation was to be effected, he prudently left the battle to his youthful champion.

Mr. Vivian Grey proceeded with the utmost *sang froid;* he commented upon expressions, split and subtilised words, insinuated opinions, and finally quoted a whole passage of Bolingbroke to prove that the opinion of the most noble the Marquess of Carabas was one of the soundest, wisest, and most convincing of opinions that ever was promulgated by mortal man. The tables were turned, the guests looked astounded, the Marquess settled his ruffles, and perpetually exclaimed, 'Exactly what I meant!' and his opponents, full of wine and quite puzzled, gave in.

It was a rule with Vivian Grey never to advance any opinion as his own. He had been too deep a student of human nature, not to be aware that the opinions of a boy of twenty, however sound, and however correct, stand but a poor chance of being adopted by his elder, though feebler, fellow-creatures. In attaining any end, it was therefore his system always to advance his opinion as that of some eminent and considered personage; and when, under the sanc-

tion of this name, the opinion or advice was entertained and listened to, Vivian Grey had no fear that he could prove its correctness and its expediency. He possessed also the singular faculty of being able to improvise quotations, that is, he could unpremeditatedly clothe his conceptions in language characteristic of the style of any particular author; and Vivian Grey was reputed in the world as having the most astonishing memory that ever existed; for there was scarcely a subject of discussion in which he did not gain the victory, by the great names he enlisted on his side of the argument. His father was aware of the existence of this dangerous faculty, and had often remonstrated with his son on the use of it. On the present occasion, when the buzz had somewhat subsided, Mr. Grey looked smiling to his son, and said, 'Vivian, my dear, can you tell me in what work of Bolingbroke I can find the eloquent passage you have just quoted?' 'Ask Mr. Hargrave, sir,' replied the son, with perfect coolness; then, turning to the member, 'You know, Mr. Hargrave, you are reputed the most profound political student in the House, and more intimately acquainted than any other person with the works of Bolingbroke.'

Mr. Hargrave knew no such thing; but he was a weak man, and, seduced by the compliment, he was afraid to prove himself unworthy of it by confessing his ignorance of the passage.

Coffee was announced.

Vivian did not let the peer escape him in the drawing-room. He soon managed to enter into conversation with him; and certainly the Marquess of Carabas never found a more entertaining companion. Vivian discoursed on a new Venetian liqueur, and

taught the Marquess how to mull Moselle, an operation of which the Marquess had never heard (as who has?); and then the flood of anecdotes, and little innocent personalities, and the compliments so exquisitely introduced, that they scarcely appeared to be compliments; and the voice so pleasant, and conciliating, and the quotation from the Marquess's own speech; and the wonderful art of which the Marquess was not aware, by which, during all this time, the lively chattering, amusing, elegant conversationist, so full of scandal, politics, and cookery, did not so much appear to be Mr. Vivian Grey as the Marquess of Carabas himself.

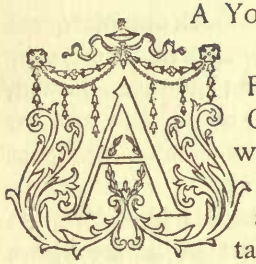
'Well, I must be gone,' said the fascinated noble; 'I really have not felt in such spirits for some time; I almost fear I have been vulgar enough to be amusing, eh! eh! eh! but you young men are sad fellows, eh! eh! eh! Don't forget to call on me; good evening! and Mr. Vivian Grey! Mr. Vivian Grey!' said his lordship, returning, 'you will not forget the receipt you promised me for making tomahawk punch.'

'Certainly not, my Lord,' said the young man; 'only it must be invented first,' thought Vivian, as he took up his light to retire. 'But never mind, never mind;

Chapeau bas! chapeau bas!
Gloire au Marquis de Carabas!'

CHAPTER II.

A Youthful Diplomatist.



FEW days after the dinner at Mr. Grey's, as the Marquess of Carabas was sitting in his library, and sighing, in the fulness of his ennui, as he looked on his large library table, once triply covered with official communications, now thinly besprinkled with a stray parliamentary paper or two, his steward's accounts, and a few letters from some grumbling tenants, Mr. Vivian Grey was announced.

'I fear I am intruding on your Lordship, but I really could not refrain from bringing you the receipt I promised.'

'Most happy to see ye, most happy to see ye.'

'This is exactly the correct receipt, my Lord. To EVERY TWO BOTTLES OF STILL CHAMPAGNE, ONE PINT OF CURAÇOA.' The Peer's eyes glistened, and his companion proceeded; 'ONE PINT OF CURAÇOA; CATCH THE AROMA OF A POUND OF GREEN TEA, AND DASH THE WHOLE WITH GLENLIVET.'

'Splendid!' ejaculated the Marquess.

'The nice point, however, which it is impossible to define in a receipt, is catching the aroma. What sort of a genius is your Lordship's chef?'

'First-rate! Laporte *is* a genius.'

'Well, my Lord! I shall be most happy to superintend the first concoction for you; and remember particularly,' said Vivian, rising, 'remember it must be iced.'

'Certainly, my dear fellow; but pray don't think of going yet.'

'I am very sorry, my Lord; but such a pressure of engagements; your Lordship's kindness is so great, and, really, I fear, that at this moment especially, your Lordship can scarcely be in a humour for my trifling.'

'Why this moment especially, Mr. Vivian Grey?'

'Oh, my Lord! I am perfectly aware of your Lordship's talents for business; but still I had conceived, that the delicate situation in which your Lordship is now placed, requiring such anxious attention, such ——'

'Delicate situation! anxious attention! why man! you speak riddles. I certainly have a great deal of business to transact: people are so obstinate, or so foolish, they will consult me, certainly; and certainly I feel it my duty, Mr. Vivian Grey; I feel it the duty, sir, of every Peer in this happy country (here his Lordship got parliamentary): yes, sir, I feel it due to my character, to my family, to — to — to assist with my advice all those who think fit to consult me.' Splendid peroration!

'Oh, my Lord!' carelessly remarked Vivian, 'I thought it was a mere *on dit*.'

'Thought what, my dear sir? you really quite perplex me.'

'I mean to say, my Lord; I — I thought it was impossible the overtures had been made.'

'Overtures, Mr. Vivian Grey?'

'Yes, my Lord! Overtures; has not your Lordship seen the *Post?* But I knew it was impossible; I said so, I——'

'Said what, Mr. Vivian Grey?'

'Said that the whole paragraph was unfounded.'

'Paragraph! what paragraph?' and his Lordship rose, and rang the library bell with vehemence: 'Sadler, bring me the *Morning Post.*'

The servant entered with the paper. Mr. Vivian Grey seized it from his hands before it reached the Marquess, and glancing his eye over it with the rapidity of lightning, doubled up the sheet in a convenient readable form, and pushing it into his Lordship's hands, exclaimed, 'There, my Lord! there, that will explain all.'

His Lordship read:

'We are informed that some alteration in the composition of the present administration is in contemplation; Lord Past Century, it is said, will retire; Mr. Liberal Principles will have the ——; and Mr. Charlatan Gas the ——. A noble Peer, whose practised talents have already benefited the nation, and who, on vacating his seat in the Cabinet, was elevated in the Peerage, is reported as having had certain overtures made him, the nature of which may be conceived, but which, under present circumstances, it would be indelicate in us to hint at.'

It would have been impossible for a hawk to watch its quarry with eyes of more fixed and anxious earnestness than did Vivian Grey the Marquess of Carabas, as his Lordship's eyes wandered over the paragraph. Vivian drew his chair close to the table opposite to the Marquess, and when the paragraph was read, their eyes met.

'Utterly untrue,' whispered the Peer, with an agitated voice, and with a countenance which, for a moment, seemed intellectual. 'But why, Mr. Vivian Grey should deem the fact of such overtures having been made, "impossible," I confess, astonishes me.'

'Impossible, my Lord!'

'Ay, Mr. Grey, impossible, that was your word.'

'Oh, my Lord! what should I know about these matters?'

'Nay, nay, Mr. Grey, something must have been floating in your mind: why impossible, why impossible? Did your father think so?'

'My father! Oh! no, he never thinks about these matters; ours is not a political family; I am not sure that he ever looks at a newspaper.'

'But, my dear Mr. Grey, you would not have used the word without some meaning. Why did you think it impossible? impossible is such a peculiar word.' And here the Marquess looked up with great earnestness to a portrait of himself, which hung over the fire-place. It was one of Sir Thomas's happiest efforts; but it was not the happiness of the likeness, or the beauty of the painting, which now attracted his Lordship's attention; he thought only of the costume in which he appeared in that portrait: the court dress of a Cabinet Minister. 'Impossible, Mr. Grey, you must confess, is a very peculiar word,' reiterated his Lordship.

'I said impossible, my Lord, because I did conceive, that had your Lordship been of a disposition to which such overtures might have been made with any probability of success, the Marquess of Carabas would have been in a situation which would have

precluded the possibility of those overtures being made at all.'

'Hah!' and the Marquess nearly started from his seat.

'Yes, my Lord, I am a young, an inexperienced young man, ignorant of the world's ways; doubtless I was wrong, but I have much to learn,' and his voice faltered; 'but I did conceive, that having power at his command, the Marquess of Carabas did not exercise it, merely because he despised it: but what should I know of such matters, my Lord?'

'Is power a thing so easily to be despised, young man?' asked the Marquess. His eye rested on a vote of thanks from the "Merchants and Bankers of London to the Right Honourable Sidney Lorraine, President, &c., &c., &c.," which, splendidly emblazoned, and gilt, and framed, and glazed, was suspended opposite the President's portrait.

'Oh, no! my Lord, you mistake me,' eagerly burst forth Vivian. 'I am no cold-blooded philosopher that would despise that, for which, in my opinion, men, real men, should alone exist. Power! Oh! what sleepless nights, what days of hot anxiety! what exertions of mind and body! what travel! what hatred! what fierce encounters! what dangers of all possible kinds, would I not endure with a joyous spirit to gain it! But such, my Lord, I thought were feelings peculiar to inexperienced young men; and seeing you, my Lord, so situated, that you might command all and everything, and yet living as you do, I was naturally led to believe that the object of my adoration was a vain glittering bauble, of which those who could possess it, knew the utter worthlessness.'

The Peer sat in a musing mood, playing the

Devil's tattoo on the library table; at last he raised his eyes, and said in a low whisper, 'Are you so certain that I can command all and everything?'

'All and everything! did I say all and everything? Really, my Lord, you scan my expressions so critically! but I see your Lordship is smiling at my boyish nonsense! and really I feel that I have already wasted too much of your Lordship's valuable time, and displayed too much of my own ignorance.'

'My dear sir! I am not aware that I was smiling.'

'Oh! your Lordship is so very kind.'

'But, my dear sir! you are really labouring under a great mistake. I am desirous, I am particularly desirous, of having your opinion upon this subject.'

'My opinion, my Lord! what should my opinion be, but an echo of the circle in which I live, but a faithful representation of the feelings of general society?'

'And, Mr. Grey, I should be glad to know what can possibly be more interesting to me than a faithful representation of the feelings of general society on this subject?'

'The many, my Lord, are not always right.'

'Mr. Grey, the many are not often wrong. Come, my dear sir, do me the favour of being frank, and let me know why the public is of opinion that all and everything are in my power, for such, after all, were your words.'

'If I did use them, my Lord, it was because I was thinking, as I often do, what, after all, in this country is public life? Is it not a race in which the swiftest must surely win the prize; and is not that prize power? Has not your Lordship treasure? There is your moral steam which can work the world. Has

not your Lordship treasure's most splendid consequence, pure blood and aristocratic influence? The Millionaire has in his possession the seeds of everything, but he must wait for half a century till his descendant finds himself in your Lordship's state; till he is yclept noble, and then he starts fair in the grand course. All these advantages your Lordship has apparently at hand, with the additional advantage (and one, oh! how great!) of having already proved to your country that you know how to rule.'

There was a dead silence which at length the Marquess broke. 'There is much in what you say; but I cannot conceal it from myself, I have no wish to conceal it from you; I am not what I was.' O, ambition! art thou the parent of truth?

'Ah! my Lord!' eagerly rejoined Vivian, 'here is the terrible error into which you great statesmen have always fallen. Think you not, that intellect is as much a purchasable article as fine parks and fair castles? With your Lordship's tried and splendid talents, everything might be done; but, in my opinion, if, instead of a practised, an experienced, and wary Statesman, I was now addressing an idiot Earl, I should not see that the great end might not equally be consummated.'

'Say you so, my merry man, and how?'

'Why, my Lord: but—but—I feel that I am trespassing on your Lordship's time, otherwise I think I could show why society is of opinion that your Lordship can do all and everything; how, indeed, your Lordship might, in a very short time, be Prime Minister.'

'No, Mr. Grey; this conversation must be finished. I will just give orders that we may not be disturbed,

and then we shall proceed immediately. Come, now! your manner takes me, and we shall converse in the spirit of the most perfect confidence.'

Here, as the Marquess settled at the same time his chair and his countenance, and looked as anxious as if Majesty itself were consulting him on the formation of a ministry, in burst the Marchioness, notwithstanding all the remonstrances, entreaties, threats, and supplications of Mr. Sadler.

Her Ladyship had been what they style a splendid woman; that was now past, although, with the aid of cashmeres, diamonds, and turbans, her general appearance was still striking. Her Ladyship was not remarkable for anything save a correct taste for poodles, parrots, and bijouterie, and a proper admiration of Theodore Hook and John Bull.

'Oh! Marquess,' exclaimed her Ladyship, and a favourite green parrot, which came flying in after its accustomed perch, her Ladyship's left shoulder, shrieked at the same time in concert. 'Oh! Marquess, my poor Julie! You know we have noticed how nervous she has been for some days past, and I had just given her a saucer of arrow-root and milk, and she seemed a little easier, and I said to Miss Graves, "I really do think she is a leetle better," and Miss Graves said, "Yes, my Lady, I hope she is;" when just as we flattered ourselves that the dear little creature was enjoying a quiet sleep, Miss Graves called out, "Oh, my Lady! my Lady! Julie's in a fit!" and when I turned round she was lying on her back, kicking, with her eyes shut.' And here the Marchioness detected Mr. Grey, and gave him as sublime a stare as might be expected from a lady patroness of Almack's.

'The Marchioness, Mr. Vivian Grey; my love, I assure you we are engaged in a most important, a most——'

'Oh! I would not disturb you for the world, only if you will just tell me what you think ought to be done; leeches, or a warm bath; or shall I send for Doctor Blue Pill?'

The Marquess looked a little annoyed, as if he wished her Ladyship in her own room again. He was almost meditating a gentle reprimand, vexed that his grave young friend should have witnessed this frivolous intrusion, when that accomplished stripling, to the astonishment of the future minister, immediately recommended 'the warm bath,' and then lectured, with equal rapidity and erudition, on dogs, and their diseases in general.

The Marchioness retired, 'easier in her mind about Julie than she had been for some days,' as Vivian assured her 'that it was not apoplexy, but only the first symptom of an epidemic.' And as she retired, she murmured her gratitude gracefully to Julie's young physician.

'Now, Mr. Grey,' said his Lordship, endeavouring to recover his dignity, 'we were discussing the public sentiments you know on a certain point, when this unfortunate interruption——'

Vivian had not much difficulty in collecting his ideas, and he proceeded, not as displeased as his Lordship with the domestic scene.

'I need not remind your Lordship that the two great parties into which this State is divided are apparently very unequally proportioned. Your Lordship well knows how the party to which your Lordship is said to belong—your Lordship knows, I imagine,

how that is constituted. We have nothing to do with the other. My Lord, I must speak out. No thinking man, and such, I trust, Vivian Grey is, no thinking man can for a moment suppose that your Lordship's heart is very warm in the cause of a party, which, for I will not mince my words, has betrayed you. How is it, it is asked by thinking men, how is it that the Marquess of Carabas is the tool of a faction?'

The Marquess breathed aloud, 'They say so, do they?'

'Why, my Lord, listen even to your servants in your own hall, need I say more? How, then! is this opinion true? Let us look at your conduct to the party to which you are said to belong. Your votes are theirs, your influence is theirs; and for all this, what return, my Lord Marquess, what return? My Lord, I am not rash enough to suppose that your Lordship, alone and unsupported, can make yourself the arbiter of this country's destinies. It would be ridiculous to entertain such an idea for a second. The existence of such a man would not be endured by the nation for a second. But, my Lord, union is strength. Nay, my Lord, start not; I am not going to advise you to throw yourself into the arms of opposition; leave such advice for greenhorns. I am not going to adopt a line of conduct, which would, for a moment, compromise the consistency of your high character; leave such advice for fools. My Lord, it is to preserve your consistency, it is to vindicate your high character, it is to make the Marquess of Carabas perform the duties which society requires from him, that I, Vivian Grey, a member of that society, and an humble friend of your Lordship, speak so boldly.'

'My friend,' said the agitated Peer, 'you cannot speak too boldly. My mind opens to you. I have felt, I have long felt, that I was not what I ought to be, that I was not what society requires me to be; but where is your remedy? what is the line of conduct that I should pursue?'

'The remedy, my Lord! I never conceived, for a moment, that there was any doubt of the existence of means to attain all and everything. I think that was your Lordship's phrase. I only hesitated as to the existence of the inclination on the part of your Lordship.'

'You cannot doubt it now,' said the Peer, in a low voice; and then his Lordship looked anxiously round the room, as if he feared that there had been some mysterious witness to his whisper.

'My Lord,' said Vivian, and he drew his chair close to the Marquess, 'the plan is shortly this. There are others in a similar situation with yourself. All thinking men know, your Lordship knows still better, that there are others equally influential, equally ill-treated. How is it that I see no concert among these individuals? How is it that, jealous of each other, or each trusting that he may ultimately prove an exception to the system of which he is a victim; how is it, I say, that you look with cold hearts on each other's situation? My Lord Marquess, it is at the head of these that I would place you; it is these that I would have act with you; and this is the union which is strength.'

'You are right, you are right: there is Courtown, but we do not speak; there is Beaconsfield, but we are not intimate; but much might be done.'

'My Lord, you must not be daunted at a few difficulties, or at a little exertion. But as for Courtown, or

Beaconsfield, or fifty other offended men, if it can be shown to them that their interest is to be your Lordship's friend, trust me that ere six months are over, they will have pledged their troth. Leave all this to me, give me your Lordship's name,' said Vivian, whispering most earnestly in the Marquess's ear, and laying his hand upon his Lordship's arm; 'give me your Lordship's name, and your Lordship's influence, and I will take upon myself the whole organisation of the Carabas party.'

'The Carabas party! Ah! we must think more of this.'

The Marquess's eyes smiled with triumph, as he shook Vivian cordially by the hand, and begged him to call upon him on the morrow.

CHAPTER III.

Vivian in High Favour.

THE intercourse between the Marquess and Vivian after this interview was constant. No dinner-party was thought perfect at Carabas House without the presence of the young gentleman; and as the Marchioness was delighted with the perpetual presence of an individual whom she could always consult about Julie, there was apparently no domestic obstacle to Vivian's remaining in high favour.

The Earl of Eglamour, the only child in whom were concentrated all the hopes of the illustrious House of Lorraine, was in Italy. The only remaining member of the domestic circle who was wanting was the Honorable Mrs. Felix Lorraine, the wife of the Marquess's younger brother. This lady, exhausted by the gaiety of the season, had left town somewhat earlier than she usually did, and was inhaling fresh air, and studying botany, at the magnificent seat of the Carabas family, Château Desir, at which splendid place Vivian was to pass the summer.

In the meantime all was sunshine with Vivian Grey. His noble friend and himself were in perpetual converse, and constantly engaged in deep con-

sultation. As yet, the world knew nothing, except that, according to the Marquess of Carabas, 'Vivian Grey was the most astonishingly clever and prodigiously accomplished fellow that ever breathed;' and, as the Marquess always added, 'resembled himself very much when he was young.'

But it must not be supposed that Vivian was to all the world the fascinating creature that he was to the Marquess of Carabas. Many complained that he was reserved, silent, satirical, and haughty. But the truth was, Vivian Grey often asked himself, 'Who is to be my enemy to-morrow?' He was too cunning a master of the human mind, not to be aware of the quicksands upon which all greenhorns strike; he knew too well the danger of unnecessary intimacy. A smile for a friend, and a sneer for the world, is the way to govern mankind, and such was the motto of Vivian Grey.

CHAPTER IV

Château Desir.

OW shall we describe Château Desir, that place fit for all princes? In the midst of a park of great extent, and eminent for scenery as varied as might please nature's most capricious lover; in the midst of green lawns and deep winding glens, and cooling streams, and wild forest, and soft woodland, there was gradually formed an elevation, on which was situate a mansion of great size, and of that bastard, but picturesque style of architecture, called the Italian Gothic. The date of its erection was about the middle of the sixteenth century. You entered by a noble gateway, in which the pointed style still predominated; but in various parts of which, the Ionic column, and the prominent keystone, and other creations of Roman architecture, intermingled with the expiring Gothic, into a large quadrangle, to which the square casement windows, and the triangular pediments or gable ends supplying the place of battlements, gave a varied and Italian feature. In the centre of the court, from a vast marble basin, the rim of which was enriched by a splendidly sculptured lotus border, rose a marble group representing Amphitrite with her marine attendants, whose sound-

ing shells and coral sceptres sent forth their subject element in sparkling showers. This work, the *chef d'œuvre* of a celebrated artist of Vicenza, had been purchased by Valerian, first Lord Carabas, who having spent the greater part of his life as the representative of his monarch at the Ducal Court of Venice, at length returned to his native country; and in the creation of Château Desir endeavoured to find some consolation for the loss of his beautiful villa on the banks of the Adige.

Over the gateway there rose a turreted tower, the small square window of which, notwithstanding its stout stanchions, illumined the muniment room of the House of Carabas. In the spandrils of the gateway and in many other parts of the building might be seen the arms of the family; while the tall twisted stacks of chimneys, which appeared to spring from all parts of the roof, were carved and built in such curious and quaint devices that they were rather an ornament than an excrescence. When you entered the quadrangle, you found one side solely occupied by the old hall, the huge carved rafters of whose oak roof rested on corbels of the family supporters against the walls. These walls were of stone, but covered half-way from the ground with a panelling of curiously-carved oak; whence were suspended, in massy frames, the family portraits, painted by Dutch and Italian artists. Near the dais, or upper part of the hall, there projected an oriel window, which, as you beheld, you scarcely knew what most to admire, the radiancy of its painted panes or the fantastic richness of Gothic ornament, which was profusely lavished in every part of its masonry. Here too the Gothic pendent and the Gothic fan-work were intermingled

with the Italian arabesques, which, at the time of the building of the Château, had been recently introduced into England by Hans Holbein and John of Padua.

How wild and fanciful are those ancient arabesques! Here at Château Desir, in the panelling of the old hall, might you see fantastic scrolls, separated by bodies ending in termini, and whose heads supported the Ionic volute, while the arch, which appeared to spring from these capitals, had, for a keystone, heads more monstrous than those of the fabled animals of Ctesias; or so ludicrous, that you forgot the classic griffin in the grotesque conception of the Italian artist. Here was a gibbering monkey, there a grinning pulcinello; now you viewed a chattering devil, which might have figured in the 'Temptation of St. Anthony'; and now a mournful, mystic, bearded countenance, which might have flitted in the back scene of a 'Witches' Sabbath.'

A long gallery wound through the upper story of two other sides of the quadrangle, and beneath were the show suite of apartments with a sight of which the admiring eyes of curious tourists were occasionally delighted.

The grey stone walls of this antique edifice were, in many places, thickly covered with ivy and other parasitical plants, the deep green of whose verdure beautifully contrasted with the scarlet glories of the pyrus japonica, which gracefully clustered round the windows of the lower chambers. The mansion itself was immediately surrounded by numerous ancient forest trees. There was the elm with its rich branches bending down like clustering grapes; there was the wide-spreading oak with its roots fantastically gnarled; there was the ash, with its smooth bark and elegant

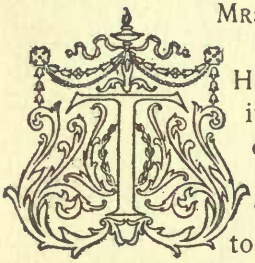
leaf; and the silver beech, and the gracile birch; and the dark fir, affording with its rough foliage a contrast to the trunks of its more beautiful companions, or shooting far above their branches, with the spirit of freedom worthy of a rough child of the mountains.

Around the Castle were extensive pleasure-grounds, which realised the romance of the 'Gardens of Verulam.' And truly, as you wandered through their enchanting paths there seemed no end to their various beauties, and no exhaustion of their perpetual novelty. Green retreats succeeded to winding walks; from the shady berçeau you vaulted on the noble terrace; and if, for an instant, you felt wearied by treading the velvet lawn, you might rest in a mossy cell, while your mind was soothed by the soft music of falling waters. Now your curious eyes were greeted by Oriental animals, basking in a sunny paddock; and when you turned from the white-footed antelope and the dark-eyed gazelle, you viewed an aviary of such extent, that within its trellised walls the imprisoned songsters could build, in the free branches of a tree, their natural nests.

'O fair scene!' thought Vivian Grey, as he approached, on a fine summer's afternoon, the splendid Château. 'O fair scene! doubly fair to those who quit for thee the thronged and agitated city. And can it be, that those who exist within this enchanted domain, can think of anything but sweet air, and do aught but revel in the breath of perfumed flowers?' And here he gained the garden-gate: so he stopped his soliloquy, and gave his horse to his groom.

CHAPTER V.

Mrs. Felix Lorraine.



HE Marquess had preceded Vivian in his arrival about three or four days, and of course, to use the common phrase, the establishment 'was quite settled.' It was, indeed, to avoid the possibility of witnessing the domestic arrangements of a nobleman in any other point of view save that of perfection, that Vivian had declined accompanying his noble friend to the Château. Mr. Grey, junior, was an epicurean, and all epicureans will quite agree with me, that his conduct on this head was extremely wise. I am not very nice myself about these matters; but there are, we all know, a thousand little things that go wrong on the arrivals of even the best regulated families; and to mention no others, for any rational being voluntarily to encounter the awful gaping of an English family, who have travelled one hundred miles in ten successive hours, appears to me to be little short of madness.

'Grey, my boy, quite happy to see ye! later than I expected; first bell rings in five minutes. Sadler will show you your room. Your father, I hope, quite well?'

Such was the salutation of the Marquess; and Vivian accordingly retired to arrange his toilet.

The first bell rang, and the second bell rang, and Vivian was seated at the dinner-table. He bowed to the Marchioness, and asked after her poodle, and gazed with some little curiosity at the vacant chair opposite him.

'Mrs. Felix Lorraine, Mr. Vivian Grey,' said the Marquess, as a lady entered the room.

Now, although we are of those historians who are of opinion that the nature of the personages they celebrate should be developed rather by a recital of their conduct than by a set character on their introduction, it is, nevertheless, incumbent upon us to devote a few lines to the lady who has just entered, which the reader will be so good as to get through, while she is accepting an offer of some white soup; by this means he will lose none of the conversation.

The Honourable Felix Lorraine we have before described as a roué. After having passed through a career with tolerable credit which would have blasted the character of any vulgar personage, Felix Lorraine ended by pigeoning a young nobleman, whom, for that purpose, he had made his intimate friend. The affair got wind; after due examination, was proclaimed 'too bad,' and the guilty personage was visited with the heaviest vengeance of modern society; he was expelled his club. By this unfortunate exposure, Mr. Felix Lorraine was obliged to give in a match, which was on the tapis, with the celebrated Miss Mexico, on whose million he had determined to set up a character and a chariot, and at the same time pension his mistress, and subscribe to the Society for the Suppression of Vice. Felix left England for the

Continent, and in due time was made drum-major at Barbadoes, or fiscal at Ceylon, or something of that kind. While he loitered in Europe, he made a conquest of the heart of the daughter of some German baron, and after six weeks passed in the most affectionate manner, the happy couple performing their respective duties with perfect propriety, Felix left Germany for his colonial appointment, and also left his lady behind him.

Mr. Lorraine had duly and dutifully informed his family of his marriage; and they, as amiably and affectionately, had never answered his letters, which he never expected they would. Profiting by their example, he never answered his wife's, who, in due time, to the horror of the Marquess, landed in England, and claimed the protection of her 'beloved husband's family.' The Marquess vowed he would never see her; the lady, however, one morning gained admittance, and from that moment she had never quitted her brother-in-law's roof, and not only had never quitted it, but now made the greatest favour of her staying.

The extraordinary influence which Mrs. Felix Lorraine possessed was certainly not owing to her beauty, for the lady opposite Vivian Grey had apparently no claims to admiration, on the score of her personal qualifications. Her complexion was bad, and her features were indifferent, and these characteristics were not rendered less uninterestingly conspicuous by what makes an otherwise ugly woman quite the reverse, namely, a pair of expressive eyes; for certainly this epithet could not be applied to those of Mrs. Felix Lorraine, which gazed in all the vacancy of German listlessness.

The lady did bow to Mr. Grey, and that was all; and then she negligently spooned her soup, and then, after much parade, sent it away untouched. Vivian was not under the necessity of paying any immediate courtesy to his opposite neighbour, whose silence, he perceived, was for the nonce, and consequently for him. But the day was hot, and Vivian had been fatigued by his ride, and the Marquess's champagne was excellent; and so, at last, the floodgates of his speech burst, and talk he did. He complimented her Ladyship's poodle, quoted German to Mrs. Felix Lorraine, and taught the Marquess to eat cabinet pudding with Curaçoâ sauce (a custom which, by-the-bye, I recommend to all); and then his stories, his scandal, and his sentiment; stories for the Marquess, scandal for the Marchioness, and sentiment for the Marquess's sister! That lady, who began to find out her man, had no mind to be longer silent, and although a perfect mistress of the English language, began to articulate a horrible patois, that she might not be mistaken for an Englishwoman, an occurrence which she particularly dreaded. But now came her punishment, for Vivian saw the effect which he had produced on Mrs. Felix Lorraine, and that Mrs. Felix Lorraine now wished to produce a corresponding effect upon him, and this he was determined she should not do; so new stories followed, and new compliments ensued, and finally he anticipated her sentences, and sometimes her thoughts. The lady sat silent and admiring! At last the important meal was finished, and the time came when good dull English dames retire; but of this habit Mrs. Felix Lorraine did not approve, and although she had not yet prevailed upon Lady Carabas to adopt her ideas on field-days, still, when

alone, the good-natured Marchioness had given in, and to save herself from hearing the din of male voices at a time at which during her whole life she had been unaccustomed to them, the Marchioness of Carabas dozed. Her worthy spouse, who was prevented, by the presence of Mrs. Felix Lorraine, from talking politics with Vivian, passed the bottle pretty briskly, and then, conjecturing that 'from the sunset we should have a fine day to-morrow,' fell back in his easy chair, and snored.

Mrs. Felix Lorraine looked at her noble relatives, and shrugged up her shoulders with an air which baffleth all description. 'Mr. Grey, I congratulate you on this hospitable reception; you see we treat you quite *en famille*. Come! 'tis a fine evening, you have seen as yet but little of Château Desir: we may as well enjoy the fine air on the terrace.'

CHAPTER VI.

Flirtation and Flattery.

'YOU must know, Mr. Grey, that this is my favourite walk, and I therefore expect that it will be yours.'

'It cannot indeed fail to be such, the favourite as it alike is of nature and Mrs. Felix Lorraine.'

'On my word, a very pretty sentence! And who taught you, young sir, to bandy words so fairly?'

'I never can open my mouth, except in the presence of a woman,' observed Vivian, with impudent mendacity; and he looked interesting and innocent.

'Indeed! And what do you know about such wicked work as talking to women?' and here Mrs. Felix Lorraine imitated Vivian's sentimental voice. 'Do you know,' she continued, 'I feel quite happy that you have come down here; I begin to think that we shall be great friends.'

'Nothing appears to me more evident,' said Vivian.

'How delicious is friendship;' exclaimed Mrs. Felix Lorraine; 'delightful sentiment, that prevents life from being a curse! Have you a friend, Mr. Vivian Grey?'

'Before I answer that question, I should like to know what meaning Mrs. Felix Lorraine attaches to that important monosyllable, friend.'

'Oh, you want a definition. I hate definitions; and of all the definitions in the world, the one I have been most unfortunate in has been a definition of friendship; I might say' (and here her voice sunk), 'I might say of all the sentiments in the world, friendship is the one which has been most fatal to me; but I must not inoculate you with my bad spirits; bad spirits are not for young blood like yours, leave them to old persons like myself.'

'Old!' said Vivian, in a proper tone of surprise.

'Old! ay old; how old do you think I am?'

'You may have seen twenty summers,' gallantly conjectured Vivian.

The lady looked pleased, and almost insinuated that she had seen one or two more.

'A clever woman,' thought Vivian, 'but vain; I hardly know what to think of her.'

'Mr. Grey, I fear you find me in bad spirits to-day; but alas! I—I have cause. Although we see each other to-day for the first time, yet there is something in your manner, something in the expression of your eyes, that make me believe my happiness is not altogether a matter of indifference to you.' These words, uttered in one of the sweetest voices by which ever human being was fascinated, were slowly and deliberately spoken, as if it were intended that they should rest on the ear of the object to whom they were addressed.

'My dearest madam! it is impossible that I can have but one sentiment with regard to you, that of ——'

'Of what, Mr. Grey?'

'Of solicitude for your welfare.'

The lady gently took the arm of the young man, and then with an agitated voice, and a troubled

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AFTER AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY HERMAN ROUNTREE.

Her husband's indifference was the sorrowful theme of her lamentations.

(See page 69.)

spirit, dwelt upon the unhappiness of her lot, and the cruelty of her fortunes. Her husband's indifference was the sorrowful theme of her lamentations; and she ended by asking Mr. Vivian Grey's advice, as to the line of conduct which she should pursue with regard to him; first duly informing Vivian that this was the only time and he the only person to whom this subject had been ever mentioned.

'And why should I mention it here, and to whom? The Marquess is the best of men, but——' and here she looked up in Vivian's face, and spoke volumes; 'and the Marchioness is the most amiable of women: at least, I suppose her lap-dog thinks so.'

The advice of Vivian was concise. He sent the husband to the devil in two seconds, and insisted upon the wife's not thinking of him for another moment; and then the lady dried her eyes, and promised to do her best.

'And now,' said Mrs. Felix Lorraine, 'I must talk about your own affairs. I think your plan excellent.'

'Plan, madam!'

'Yes, plan, sir! the Marquess has told me all. I have no head for politics, Mr. Grey; but if I cannot assist you in managing the nation, I perhaps may in managing the family, and my services are at your command. Believe me, you will have enough to do: there, I pledge you my troth. Do you think it a pretty hand?'

Vivian did think it a very pretty hand, and he performed due courtesies in a becoming style.

'And now, good even to you,' said the lady; 'this little gate leads to my apartments. You will have no difficulty in finding your way back.' So saying, she disappeared.

CHAPTER VII.

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or in mind, and so he had long come to the comfortable conclusion, that it was impossible that his career could be anything but the most brilliant. And truly, employed as he was now, with a peer of the realm, in a solemn consultation on that realm's most important interests, at a time when creatures of his age were moping in Halls and Colleges, is it to be wondered at that he began to imagine that his theory was borne out by experience and by fact? Not that it must be supposed, even for a moment, that Vivian Grey was what the world calls conceited. Oh no! he knew the measure of his own mind, and had fathomed the depth of his powers with equal skill and impartiality; but in the process he could not but feel that he could conceive much, and dare do more.

We said the first week at Château Desir passed pleasantly enough; and so it did, for Vivian's soul revelled in the morning councils on his future fortunes, with as much eager joy as a young courser tries the turf, preliminary to running for the plate. And then, in the evening, were moonlit walks with Mrs. Felix Lorraine! And then the lady abused England so prettily, and initiated her companion in all the secrets of German Courts, and sang beautiful French songs, and told the legends of her native land in such an interesting, semi-serious tone, that Vivian almost imagined that she believed them; and then she would take him beside the luminous lake in the park, and vow it looked just like the dark blue Rhine! and then she remembered Germany, and grew sad, and abused her husband; and then she taught Vivian the guitar, and some other fooleries besides.

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CHAPTER VIII.

All Things to All Men.

THE second week of Vivian's visit had come round, and the flag waved proudly on the proud tower of Château Desir, indicating to the admiring county, that the most noble Sidney, Marquess of Carabas, held public days twice a week at his grand castle. And now came the neighbouring peer, full of grace and gravity, and the mellow baronet, with his hearty laugh, and the jolly country squire, and the middling gentry, and the jobbing country attorney, and the flourishing country surveyor; some honouring by their presence, some who felt the obligation equal, and others bending before the noble host, as if paying him adoration was almost an equal pleasure with that of guzzling his venison pasties and quaffing his bright wines.

Independently of all these periodical visitors, the house was full of permanent ones. There were the Viscount and Viscountess Courtown and their three daughters, and Lord and Lady Beaconsfield and their three sons, and Sir Berdmore and Lady Scrope, and Colonel Delmington of the Guards, and Lady Louisa

Manvers and her daughter Julia. Lady Louisa was the only sister of the Marquess, a widow, proud and penniless.

To all these distinguished personages Vivian was introduced by the Marquess as 'a monstrous clever young man, and his Lordship's most particular friend,' and then the noble Carabas left the game in his young friend's hands.

And right well Vivian did his duty. In a week's time it would have been hard to decide with whom of the family of the Courtowns Vivian was the greatest favourite. He rode with the Viscount, who was a good horseman, and was driven by his Lady, who was a good whip; and when he had sufficiently admired the tout ensemble of her Ladyship's pony phaeton, he entrusted her, 'in confidence,' with some ideas of his own about martingales, a subject which he assured her Ladyship 'had been the object of his mature consideration.' The three honourable Misses were the most difficult part of the business; but he talked sentiment with the first, sketched with the second, and romped with the third.

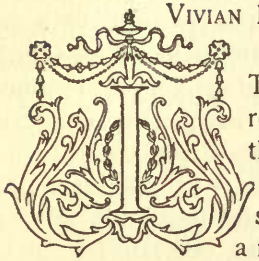
Ere the Beaconsfields could be jealous of the influence of the Courtowns, Mr. Vivian Grey had promised his Lordship, who was a collector of medals, an unique which had never yet been heard of; and her Ladyship, who was a collector of autographs, the private letters of every man of genius that ever had been heard of. In this division of the Carabas guests he was not bored with a family; for sons he always made it a rule to cut dead; they are the members of a family who, on an average, are generally very uninfluential, for, on an average, they are fools enough to think it very knowing to be very disagreeable.

So the wise man but little loves them, but woe to the fool who neglects the daughters!

Sir Berdmore Scrope Vivian found a more unmanageable personage; for the baronet was confoundedly shrewd, and without a particle of sentiment in his composition. It was a great thing, however, to gain him; for Sir Berdmore was a leading country gentleman, and having quarrelled with Ministers about the corn laws, had been counted disaffected ever since. The baronet, however, although a bold man to the world, was luckily henpecked; so Vivian made love to the wife and secured the husband.

CHAPTER IX.

Vivian Instructs an Ingénue.



I THINK that Julia Manvers was really the most beautiful creature that ever smiled in this fair world. Such a symmetrically formed shape, such perfect features, such a radiant complexion, such luxuriant auburn hair, and such blue eyes, lit up by a smile of such mind and meaning, have seldom blessed the gaze of admiring man! Vivian Grey, fresh as he was, was not exactly the creature to lose his heart very speedily. He looked upon marriage as a comedy in which, sooner or later, he was, as a well-paid actor, to play his part; and could it have advanced his views one jot he would have married the Princess Caraboo to-morrow. But of all wives in the world, a young and handsome one was that which he most dreaded; and how a statesman who was wedded to a beautiful woman could possibly perform his duties to the public, did most exceedingly puzzle him. Notwithstanding these sentiments, however, Vivian began to think that there really could be no harm in talking to so beautiful a creature as Julia, and a little conversation with her would, he felt, be no unpleasing relief to the difficult duties in which he was involved.

To the astonishment of the Honourable Buckhurst Stanhope, eldest son of Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Vivian Grey, who had never yet condescended to acknowledge his existence, asked him one morning, with the most fascinating of smiles and with the most conciliating voice, 'whether they should ride together.' The young heir-apparent looked stiff and assented. He arrived again at Château Desir in a couple of hours, desperately enamoured of the eldest Miss Courtown. The sacrifice of two mornings to the Honourable Dormer Stanhope and the Honourable Gregory Stanhope sent them home equally captivated by the remaining sisters. Having thus, like a man of honour, provided for the amusement of his former friends, the three Miss Courtowns, Vivian left Mrs. Felix Lorraine to the Colonel, whose moustache, by-the-bye, that lady considerably patronised; and then, having excited an universal feeling of gallantry among the elders, Vivian found his whole day at the service of Julia Manvers.

'Miss Manvers, I think that you and I are the only faithful subjects in this Castle of Indolence. Here am I lounging on an ottoman, my ambition reaching only so far as the possession of a chibouque, whose aromatic and circling wreaths, I candidly confess, I dare not here excite; and you, of course, much too knowing to be doing anything on the first of August save dreaming of races, archery feats, and country balls: the three most delightful things which the country can boast, either for man, woman, or child.'

'Of course, you except sporting for yourself, shooting especially, I suppose.'

'Shooting, oh! ah! there is such a thing. No, I am no shot; not that I have not in my time cul-

tivated a Manton; but the truth is, having, at an early age, mistaken my intimate friend for a cock pheasant, I sent a whole crowd of fours into his face, and thereby spoilt one of the prettiest countenances in Christendom; so I gave up the field. Besides, as Tom Moore says, I have so much to do in the country, that, for my part, I really have no time for killing birds and jumping over ditches: good work enough for country squires, who must, like all others, have their hours of excitement. Mine are of a different nature, and boast a different locality; and so when I come into the country, 'tis for pleasant air, and beautiful trees, and winding streams; things which, of course, those who live among them all the year round do not suspect to be lovely and adorable creations. Don't you agree with Tom Moore, Miss Manvers?'

'Oh, of course! but I think it is very improper, that habit, which every one has, of calling a man of such eminence as the author of "Lalla Rookh" *Tom* Moore.'

'I wish he could but hear you! But, suppose I were to quote *Mr.* Moore, or *Mr. Thomas* Moore, would you have the most distant conception whom I meant? Certainly not. By-the-bye, did you ever hear the pretty name they gave him at Paris?'

'No, what was it?'

'One day Moore and Rogers went to call on Denon. Rogers gave their names to the Swiss, Monsieur Rogers et Monsieur Moore. The Swiss dashed open the library door, and, to the great surprise of the illustrious antiquary, announced, Monsieur l'Amour! While Denon was doubting whether the God of Love was really paying him a visit or not,

Rogers entered. I should like to have seen Denon's face!'

'And Monsieur Denon did take a portrait of Mr. Rogers as Cupid, I believe?'

'Come, madam, "no scandal about Queen Elizabeth." Mr. Rogers is one of the most elegant-minded men in the country.'

'Nay! do not lecture me with such a laughing face, or else your moral will be utterly thrown away.'

'Ah! you have Retsch's "Faust" there. I did not expect on a drawing-room table at Château Desir to see anything so old, and so excellent. I thought the third edition of Tremaine would be a very fair specimen of your ancient literature, and Major Denham's hair-breadth escapes of your modern. There was an excellent story about, on the return of Denham and Clapperton. The travellers took different routes, in order to arrive at the same point of destination. In his wanderings the Major came unto an unheard-of Lake, which, with the spirit which they of the Guards surely approved, he christened "Lake Waterloo." Clapperton arrived a few days after him; and the pool was immediately re-baptised "Lake Trafalgar." There was a hot quarrel in consequence. Now, if I had been there, I would have arranged matters, by proposing as a title, to meet the views of all parties, "The United Service Lake."'

'That would have been happy.'

'How beautiful Margaret is,' said Vivian, rising from his ottoman, and seating himself on the sofa by the lady. 'I always think that this is the only personification where Art has not rendered Innocence insipid.'

'Do you think so?'

'Why, take Una in the Wilderness, or Goody Two Shoes. These, I believe, were the most innocent persons that ever existed, and I am sure you will agree with me, they always looked the most insipid. Nay, perhaps I was wrong in what I said; perhaps it is Insipidity that always looks innocent, not Innocence always insipid.'

'How can you refine so, when the thermometer is at 100°! Pray, tell me some more stories.'

'I cannot, I am in a refining humour: I could almost lecture to-day at the Royal Institution. You would not call these exactly Prosopopeias of Innocence?' said Vivian, turning over a bundle of Stewart Newton's beauties, languishing, and lithographed. 'Newton, I suppose, like Lady Wortley Montague, is of opinion, that the face is not the most beautiful part of woman; at least, if I am to judge from these elaborate ankles. Now, the countenance of this Donna, forsooth, has a drowsy placidity worthy of the easy chair she is lolling in, and yet her ankle would not disgrace the contorted frame of the most pious faquir.'

'Well! I am an admirer of Newton's paintings.'

'Oh! so am I. He is certainly a cleverish fellow, but rather too much among the blues; a set, of whom, I would venture to say, Miss Manvers knoweth little about.'

'Oh, not the least! Mamma does not visit that way. What are they?'

'Oh, very powerful people! though "Mamma does not visit that way." Their words are Ukases as far as Curzon Street, and very Decretals in the general vicinity of May Fair; but you shall have a further description another time. How those rooks bore! I

hate staying with ancient families; you are always cawed to death. If ever you write a novel, Miss Manvers, mind you have a rookery in it. Since Tremaine, and Washington Irving, nothing will go down without.'

'By-the-bye, who is the author of Tremaine?'

'It is either Mr. Ryder, or Mr. Spencer Percival, or Mr. Dyson, or Miss Dyson, or Mr. Bowles, or the Duke of Buckingham, or Mr. Ward, or a young officer in the Guards, or an old clergyman in the North of England, or a middle-aged barrister on the Midland Circuit.'

'Mr. Grey, I wish you could get me an autograph of Mr. Washington Irving; I want it for a particular friend.'

'Give me a pen and ink; I will write you one immediately.'

'Ridiculous!'

'There! now you have made me blot Faustus.'

At this moment the room-door suddenly opened, and as suddenly shut.

'Who was that?'

'Mephistopheles, or Mrs. Felix Lorraine; one or the other, perhaps both.'

'What!'

'What do you think of Mrs. Felix Lorraine, Miss Manvers?'

'Oh! I think her a very amusing woman, a very clever woman, a very —— but ——'

'But what?'

'But I cannot exactly make her out.'

'Nor I; she is a dark riddle; and, although I am a very Œdipus, I confess I have not yet unravelled it. Come, there is Washington Irving's autograph

for you; read it; is it not quite in character? Shall I write any more? One of Sir Walter's or Mr. Southey's or Mr. Milman's, or Mr. Disraeli's? or shall I sprawl a Byron?'

'I really cannot sanction such unprincipled conduct. You may make me one of Sir Walter's, however.'

'Poor Washington!' said Vivian, writing. 'I knew him well. He always slept at dinner. One day, as he was dining at Mr. Hallam's, they took him, when asleep, to Lady Jersey's: and, to see the Sieur Geoffrey, they say, when he opened his eyes in the illumined saloons, was really quite admirable! quite an Arabian tale!'

'How delightful! I should have so liked to have seen him! He seems quite forgotten now in England. How came we to talk of him?'

'Forgotten! Oh! he spoilt his elegant talents in writing German and Italian twaddle with all the rawness of a Yankee. He ought never to have left America, at least in literature; there was an uncontested and glorious field for him. He should have been managing director of the Hudson Bay Company, and lived all his life among the beavers.'

'I think there is nothing more pleasant than talking over the season, in the country, in August.'

'Nothing more agreeable. It was dull though, last season, very dull; I think the game cannot be kept going another year. If it were not for the General Election, we really must have a war for variety's sake. Peace gets quite a bore. Everybody you dine with has a good cook, and gives you a dozen different wines, all perfect. We cannot bear this any longer; all the lights and shadows of life are lost. The only

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CHAPTER X.

Disappointment.

ONFUSION on that old hag! Her eye looked evil on me, at the very moment! Although a pretty wife is really the destruction of a young man's prospects, still in the present case, the niece of my friend, my patron, high family, perfectly unexceptionable, &c. &c. &c. Such blue eyes! upon my honour, this must be an exception to the general rule.' Here a light step attracted his attention, and, on turning round, he found Mrs. Felix Lorraine at his elbow.

'Oh! you are here, Mr. Grey, acting the solitaire in the park! I want your opinion about a passage in "Herman and Dorothea."'

'My opinion is always at your service; but, if the passage is not perfectly clear to Mrs. Felix Lorraine, it will be perfectly obscure, I am convinced, to me.'

'Ah! yes, of course. Oh, dear! after all my trouble, I have forgotten my book. How mortifying! Well, I will show it to you after dinner: adieu! and, by-the-bye, Mr. Grey, as I am here, I may as well advise you not to spoil all the Marquess's timber, by carving a certain person's name on his park trees. I think your plans in that quarter are admirable. I have been walking with Lady Louisa the whole

morning, and you cannot think how I puffed you! Courage, Cavalier, and we shall soon be connected, not only in friendship, but in blood.'

The next morning, at breakfast, Vivian was surprised to find that the Manvers party was suddenly about to leave the Castle. All were disconsolate at their departure: for there was to be a grand entertainment at Château Desir that very day, but particularly Mrs. Felix Lorraine and Mr. Vivian Grey. The sudden departure was accounted for by the arrival of 'unexpected,' &c. &c. &c. There was no hope; the green post-chariot was at the door, a feeble promise of a speedy return; Julia's eyes were filled with tears. Vivian was springing forward to press her hand, and bear her to the carriage, when Mrs. Felix Lorraine seized his arm, vowed she was going to faint, and, ere she could recover herself, or loosen her grasp, the Manvers were gone.

alone, the good-natured Marchioness had given in, and to save herself from hearing the din of male voices at a time at which during her whole life she had been unaccustomed to them, the Marchioness of Carabas dozed. Her worthy spouse, who was prevented, by the presence of Mrs. Felix Lorraine, from talking politics with Vivian, passed the bottle pretty briskly, and then, conjecturing that 'from the sunset we should have a fine day to-morrow,' fell back in his easy chair, and snored.

Mrs. Felix Lorraine looked at her noble relatives, and shrugged up her shoulders with an air which baffleth all description. 'Mr. Grey, I congratulate you on this hospitable reception; you see we treat you quite *en famille*. Come! 'tis a fine evening, you have seen as yet but little of Château Desir: we may as well enjoy the fine air on the terrace.'

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'It cannot indeed fail to be such, the favourite as it alike is of nature and Mrs. Felix Lorraine.'

'On my word, a very pretty sentence! And who taught you, young sir, to bandy words so fairly?'

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'Indeed! And what do you know about such wicked work as talking to women?' and here Mrs. Felix Lorraine imitated Vivian's sentimental voice. 'Do you know,' she continued, 'I feel quite happy that you have come down here; I begin to think that we shall be great friends.'

'Nothing appears to me more evident,' said Vivian.

'How delicious is friendship;' exclaimed Mrs. Felix Lorraine; 'delightful sentiment, that prevents life from being a curse! Have you a friend, Mr. Vivian Grey?'

'Before I answer that question, I should like to know what meaning Mrs. Felix Lorraine attaches to that important monosyllable, friend.'

has been behind-hand ever since he had the fever, but Mr. Sedgwick always gave time: but Lord Mounteney's gem'man says the system's bad, and so he'll put an end to it; and so all's gone, your honour; all's gone, and I'm mortal fear'd the good man's beside himself.'

'And who is Lord Mounteney's man of business?'

'Mr. Stapylton Toad,' sobbed the good dame.

'Here, boy, leave off crying, and hold my horse; keep your hold tight, but give him rein, he'll be quiet enough then. I will see honest John, dame.'

'I'm sure your honour's very kind, but I'm mortal fear'd the good man's beside himself, and he's apt to do very violent things when the fit's on him. He hasn't been so bad since young Barton behaved so wickedly to his sister.'

'Never mind! there is nothing like a friend's face in the hour of sorrow.'

'I wouldn't advise your honour,' said the good dame. 'It's an awful hour when the fit's on him; he knows not friend or foe, and scarcely knows me, your honour.'

'Never mind, I'll see him.'

Vivian entered the house; but who shall describe the scene of desolation! The room was entirely stripped; there was nothing left, save the bare white-washed walls, and the red-tiled flooring. The room was darkened; and seated on an old block of wood, which had been pulled out of the orchard, since the bailiff had left, was John Conyers. The fire was out, but his feet were still among the ashes. His head was buried in his hands, and bowed down nearly to his knees. The eldest girl, a fine sensible child of about thirteen, was sitting with two brothers on the

floor in a corner of the room, motionless, their faces grave, and still as death, but tearless. Three young children, of an age too tender to know grief, were acting unmeaning gambols near the door.

'Oh! pray beware, your honour,' earnestly whispered the poor dame, as she entered the cottage with the visitor.

Vivian walked up with a silent step to the end of the room, where Conyers was sitting. He remembered this little room, when he thought it the very model of the abode of an English husbandman. The neat row of plates, and the well-scoured utensils, and the fine old Dutch clock, and the ancient and amusing ballad, purchased at some neighbouring fair, or of some itinerant bibliopole, and pinned against the wall, all gone!

'Conyers!' exclaimed Vivian.

There was no answer, nor did the miserable man appear in the slightest degree to be sensible of Vivian's presence.

'My good John!'

The man raised his head from his resting-place, and turned to the spot whence the voice proceeded. There was such an unnatural fire in his eyes, that Vivian's spirit almost quailed. His alarm was not decreased, when he perceived that the master of the cottage did not recognise him. The fearful stare was, however, short, and again the sufferer's face was hid.

The wife was advancing, but Vivian waved his hand to her to withdraw, and she accordingly fell into the background; but her fixed eye did not leave her husband for a second.

'John Conyers, it is your friend, Mr. Vivian Grey, who is here,' said Vivian.

Rogers entered. I should like to have seen Denon's face!'

'And Monsieur Denon did take a portrait of Mr. Rogers as Cupid, I believe?'

'Come, madam, "no scandal about Queen Elizabeth." Mr. Rogers is one of the most elegant-minded men in the country.'

'Nay! do not lecture me with such a laughing face, or else your moral will be utterly thrown away.'

'Ah! you have Retsch's "Faust" there. I did not expect on a drawing-room table at Château Desir to see anything so old, and so excellent. I thought the third edition of Tremaine would be a very fair specimen of your ancient literature, and Major Denham's hair-breadth escapes of your modern. There was an excellent story about, on the return of Denham and Clapperton. The travellers took different routes, in order to arrive at the same point of destination. In his wanderings the Major came unto an unheard-of Lake, which, with the spirit which they of the Guards surely approved, he christened "Lake Waterloo." Clapperton arrived a few days after him; and the pool was immediately re-baptised "Lake Trafalgar." There was a hot quarrel in consequence. Now, if I had been there, I would have arranged matters, by proposing as a title, to meet the views of all parties, "The United Service Lake."'

'That would have been happy.'

'How beautiful Margaret is,' said Vivian, rising from his ottoman, and seating himself on the sofa by the lady. 'I always think that this is the only personification where Art has not rendered Innocence insipid.'

'Do you think so?'

'Why, take Una in the Wilderness, or Goody Two Shoes. These, I believe, were the most innocent persons that ever existed, and I am sure you will agree with me, they always looked the most insipid. Nay, perhaps I was wrong in what I said; perhaps it is Insipidity that always looks innocent, not Innocence always insipid.'

'How can you refine so, when the thermometer is at 100°! Pray, tell me some more stories.'

'I cannot, I am in a refining humour: I could almost lecture to-day at the Royal Institution. You would not call these exactly Prosopopeias of Innocence?' said Vivian, turning over a bundle of Stewart Newton's beauties, languishing, and lithographed. 'Newton, I suppose, like Lady Wortley Montague, is of opinion, that the face is not the most beautiful part of woman; at least, if I am to judge from these elaborate ankles. Now, the countenance of this Donna, forsooth, has a drowsy placidity worthy of the easy chair she is lolling in, and yet her ankle would not disgrace the contorted frame of the most pious faquir.'

'Well! I am an admirer of Newton's paintings.'

'Oh! so am I. He is certainly a cleverish fellow, but rather too much among the blues; a set, of whom, I would venture to say, Miss Manvers knoweth little about.'

'Oh, not the least! Mamma does not visit that way. What are they?'

'Oh, very powerful people! though "Mamma does not visit that way." Their words are Ukases as far as Curzon Street, and very Decretals in the general vicinity of May Fair; but you shall have a further description another time. How those rooks bore! I

CHAPTER XII.

The Mighty Mrs. Million.

MRS. MILLION arrived, and kept her promise; only three carriages-and-four! Out of the first descended the mighty lady herself, with some noble friends, who formed the most distinguished part of her suite: out of the second came her physician, Dr. Sly; her toad-eater, Miss Gusset; her secretary, and her page. The third carriage bore her groom of the chambers, and three female attendants. There were only two men servants to each equipage; nothing could be more moderate, or, as Miss Gusset said, 'in better taste.'

Mrs. Million, after having granted the Marquess a private interview in her private apartments, signified her imperial intention of dining in public, which, as she had arrived late, she trusted she might do in her travelling dress. The Marquess kotooed like a first-rate mandarin, and vowed 'that her will was his conduct.'

The whole suite of apartments were thrown open, and was crowded with guests. Mrs. Million entered; she was leaning on the Marquess's arm, and in a travelling dress, namely, a crimson silk pelisse, hat and

feathers, with diamond ear-rings, and a rope of gold round her neck. A train of about twelve persons, consisting of her noble fellow-travellers, toad-eaters, physicians, secretaries, &c. &c. &c. followed. The entrée of Her Majesty could not have created a greater sensation than did that of Mrs. Million. All fell back. Gartered peers, and starred ambassadors, and baronets with blood older than the creation, and squires, to the antiquity of whose veins chaos was a novelty; all retreated, with eyes that scarcely dared to leave the ground; even Sir Plantagenet Pure, whose family had refused a peerage regularly every century, now, for the first time in his life, seemed cowed, and in an awkward retreat to make way for the approaching presence, got entangled with the Mameluke boots of my Lord Alhambra.

At last a sofa was gained, and the great lady was seated, and the sensation having somewhat subsided, conversation was resumed; and the mighty Mrs. Million was not slightly abused, particularly by those who had bowed lowest at her entrée; and now the Marquess of Carabas, as was wittily observed by Mr. Septimus Sessions, a pert young barrister, 'went the circuit,' that is to say, made the grand tour of the suite of apartments, making remarks to every one of his guests, and keeping up his influence in the county.

'Ah, my Lord Alhambra! this is too kind; and how is your excellent father, and my good friend? Sir Plantagenet, yours most sincerely! we shall have no difficulty about that right of common. Mr. Leverton, I hope you find the new plough work well; your son, sir, will do the county honour. Sir Godfrey, I saw Barton upon that point, as I promised.

So the wise man but little loves them, but woe to the fool who neglects the daughters!

Sir Berdmore Scrope Vivian found a more unmanageable personage; for the baronet was confoundedly shrewd, and without a particle of sentiment in his composition. It was a great thing, however, to gain him; for Sir Berdmore was a leading country gentleman, and having quarrelled with Ministers about the corn laws, had been counted disaffected ever since. The baronet, however, although a bold man to the world, was luckily henpecked; so Vivian made love to the wife and secured the husband.

CHAPTER IX.

Vivian Instructs an Ingénue.

I THINK that Julia Manvers was really the most beautiful creature that ever smiled in this fair world. Such a symmetrically formed shape, such perfect features, such a radiant complexion, such luxuriant auburn hair, and such blue eyes, lit up by a smile of such mind and meaning, have seldom blessed the gaze of admiring man! Vivian Grey, fresh as he was, was not exactly the creature to lose his heart very speedily. He looked upon marriage as a comedy in which, sooner or later, he was, as a well-paid actor, to play his part; and could it have advanced his views one jot he would have married the Princess Caraboo to-morrow. But of all wives in the world, a young and handsome one was that which he most dreaded; and how a statesman who was wedded to a beautiful woman could possibly perform his duties to the public, did most exceedingly puzzle him. Notwithstanding these sentiments, however, Vivian began to think that there really could be no harm in talking to so beautiful a creature as Julia, and a little conversation with her would, he felt, be no unpleasing relief to the difficult duties in which he was involved.

not appeared. The important moment arrived, and his Lordship offered his arm to Mrs. Million, who, as the Gotha Almanack says, 'takes precedence of all Archduchesses, Grand Duchesses, Duchesses, Princesses, Landgravines, Margravines, Palsgravines, &c. &c. &c.'

CHAPTER XIII.

The Distinguished Mr. Toad.

IN THEIR passage to the Hall, the Marquess and Mrs. Million met Vivian Grey, booted and spurred, and covered with mud.

'Oh! Mrs. Million—Mr. Vivian Grey. How is this, my dear fellow? you will be too late.'

'Immense honour!' said Vivian, bowing to the ground to the lady. 'Oh! my Lord, I was late and made a short cut over Fearnley Bog. It has proved a very Moscow expedition. However, I am keeping you. I shall be in time for the guava and liqueurs, and you know that is the only refreshment I ever take.'

'Who is that, Marquess?' asked Mrs. Million.

'That is Mr. Vivian Grey, the most monstrous clever young man, and nicest fellow I know.'

'He does, indeed, seem a very nice young man,' said Mrs. Million.

Some steam process should be invented for arranging guests when they are above five hundred. In the present instance all went wrong when they entered the Hall; but, at last, the arrangements, which, of course, were of the simplest nature, were comprehended, and the guests were seated. There were three tables, each stretching down the Hall; the

dais was occupied by a military band. The number of guests, the contrast between the antique chamber and their modern costumes, the music, the various liveried menials, all combined to produce a whole, which at the same time was very striking, and 'in remarkable good taste.'

In process of time, Mr. Vivian Grey made his entrance. There were a few vacant seats at the bottom of the table, 'luckily for him,' as kindly remarked Mr. Grumbleton. To the astonishment and indignation, however, of this worthy squire, the late comer passed by the unoccupied position, and proceeded onward with undaunted coolness, until he came to about the middle of the middle table, and which was nearly the best situation in the Hall.

'Beautiful Cynthia,' said Vivian Grey, softly and sweetly whispering in Miss Courtown's ear, 'I am sure you will give up your place to me; you have nerve enough, you know, for anything, and would no more care for standing out than I for sitting in.' There is nothing like giving a romp credit for a little boldness. To keep up her character she will outherod Herod.

'Oh! Grey, is it you? certainly, you shall have my place immediately; but I am not sure that we cannot make room for you. Dormer Stanhope, room must be made for Grey, or I shall leave the table immediately. You men!' said the hoyden, turning round to a set of surrounding servants, 'push this form down and put a chair between.'

The men obeyed. All who sat lower in the table on Miss Cynthia Courtown's side than that lady, were suddenly propelled downwards about the distance of two feet. Dr. Sly, who was flourishing a carving-

knife and fork, preparatory to dissecting a gorgeous haunch, had these fearful instruments suddenly precipitated into a trifle, from whose sugared trellis-work he found great difficulty in extricating them; while Miss Gusset, who was on the point of cooling herself with some exquisite iced jelly, found her frigid portion as suddenly transformed into a plate of peculiarly ardent curry, the property, but a moment before, of old Colonel Rangoon. Everything, however, receives a civil reception from a toad-eater, so Miss Gusset burnt herself to death by devouring a composition, which would have reduced anyone to ashes who had not fought against Bundoolah.

'Now, that is what I call a sensible arrangement; what could go off better?' said Vivian.

'You may think so, sir,' said Mr. Boreall, a sharp-nosed and conceited-looking man, who, having got among a set whom he did not the least understand, was determined to take up Dr. Sly's quarrel, merely for the sake of conversation. 'You, I say, sir, may think it so, but I rather imagine that the ladies and gentlemen lower down can hardly think it a sensible arrangement;' and here Boreall looked as if he had done his duty, in giving a young man a proper reproof.

Vivian glanced a look of annihilation. 'I had reckoned upon two deaths, sir, when I entered the Hall, and finding, as I do, that the whole business has apparently gone off without any fatal accident, why, I think the circumstances bear me out in my expression.'

Mr. Boreall was one of those unfortunate men who always take things to the letter: he consequently looked amazed, and exclaimed, 'Two deaths, sir?'

'Yes, sir, two deaths; I reckoned, of course, on some corpulent parent being crushed to death in the scuffle, and then I should have had to shoot his son through the head for his filial satisfaction. Dormer Stanhope, I never thanked you for exerting yourself: send me that fricandeau you have just helped yourself to.'

Dormer, who was, as Vivian well knew, something of an epicure, looked rather annoyed, but by this time he was accustomed to Vivian Grey, and sent him the portion he had intended for himself. Could epicure do more?

'Whom are we among, bright Cynthia?' asked Vivian.

'Oh! an odd set,' said the lady, looking dignified; 'but you know we can be exclusive.'

'Exclusive! pooh! trash! Talk to everybody; it looks as if you were going to stand for the county. Have we any of the millionaires near us?'

'The Doctor and Toady are lower down.'

'Where is Mrs. Felix Lorraine?'

'At the opposite table, with Ernest Clay.'

'Oh! there is Alhambra, next to Dormer Stanhope. Lord Alhambra, I am quite rejoiced to see you.'

'Ah! Mr. Grey, I am quite rejoiced to see you. How is your father?'

'Extremely well; he is at Paris; I heard from him yesterday. Do you ever see the Weimar Literary Gazette, my Lord?'

'No; why?'

'There is an admirable review of your poem in the last number I have received.'

The young nobleman looked agitated. 'I think, by the style,' continued Vivian, 'that it is by Goëthe.

It is really delightful to see the oldest poet in Europe dilating on the brilliancy of a new star on the poetical horizon.'

This was uttered with a perfectly grave voice, and now the young nobleman blushed. 'Who is *Gewter?*' asked Mr. Boreall, who possessed such a thirst for knowledge that he never allowed an opportunity to escape him of displaying his ignorance.

'A celebrated German writer,' lisped the modest Miss Macdonald.

'I never heard his name,' persevered the indefatigable Boreall; 'how do you spell it?'

'GOETHE,' re-lisped modesty.

'Oh! *Goty!*' exclaimed the querist. 'I know him well: he wrote the Sorrows of Werter.'

'Did he indeed, sir?' asked Vivian, with the most innocent and inquiring face.

'Oh! don't you know that?' said Boreall; 'and poor stuff it is!'

'Lord Alhambra! I will take a glass of Johannisberg with you, if the Marquess's wines are in the state they should be:

> The Crescent warriors sipped their sherbet spiced,
> For Christian men the various wines were *iced.*

I always think that those are two of the best lines in our Lordship's poem,' said Vivian.

His Lordship did not exactly remember them: it would have been a wonder if he had: but he thought Vivian Grey the most delightful fellow he ever met, and determined to ask him to Helicon Castle for the Christmas holidays.

'Flat! flat!' said Vivian, as he dwelt upon the flavour of the Rhine's glory. 'Not exactly from

the favourite bin of Prince Metternich, I think. By-the-bye, Dormer Stanhope, you have a taste that way; I will tell you two secrets, which never forget: decant your Johannisberg, and ice your Maraschino. Ay, do not stare, my dear Gastronome, but do it.'

'O, Vivian! why did not you come and speak to me?' exclaimed a lady who was sitting at the side opposite Vivian, but higher in the table.

'Ah! adorable Lady Julia! and so you were done on the grey filly.'

'Done!' said the sporting beauty with pouting lips; 'but it is a long story, and I will tell it you another time.'

'Ah! do. How is Sir Peter?'

'Oh! he has had a fit or two, since you saw him last.'

'Poor old gentleman! let us drink his health. Do you know Lady Julia Knighton?' asked Vivian of his neighbour. 'This Hall is bearable to dine in; but I once breakfasted here, and I never shall forget the ludicrous effect produced by the sun through the oriel window. Such complexions! Every one looked like a prize-fighter ten days after a battle. After all, painted glass is a bore; I wish the Marquess would have it knocked out, and have it plated.'

'Knock out the painted glass!' said Mr. Boreall; 'well, I must confess, I cannot agree with you.'

'I should have been extremely surprised if you could. If you do not insult that man, Miss Courtown, in ten minutes I shall be no more. I have already a nervous fever.'

'May I have the honour of taking a glass of champagne with you, Mr. Grey?' said Boreall.

'Mr. Grey, indeed!' muttered Vivian: 'Sir, I never drink anything but brandy.'

'Allow me to give *you* some champagne, Miss,' resumed Boreall, as he attacked the modest Miss Macdonald; 'champagne, you know,' continued he, with a smile of agonising courtesy, 'is quite the lady's wine.'

'Cynthia Courtown,' whispered Vivian with a sepulchral voice, ''tis all over with me: I have been thinking what would come next. This is too much: I am already dead. Have Boreall arrested; the chain of circumstantial evidence is very strong.'

'Baker!' said Vivian, turning to a servant, 'go and inquire if Mr. Stapylton Toad dines at the Castle today.'

A flourish of trumpets announced the rise of the Marchioness of Carabas, and in a few minutes the most ornamental portion of the guests had disappeared. The gentlemen made a general 'move up,' and Vivian found himself opposite his friend, Mr. Hargrave.

'Ah! Mr. Hargrave, how d'ye do? What do you think of the Secretary's state paper?'

'A magnificent composition, and quite unanswerable. I was just speaking of it to my friend here, Mr. Metternich Scribe. Allow me to introduce you to Mr. Metternich Scribe.'

'Mr. Metternich Scribe, Mr. Vivian Grey!' and here Mr. Hargrave introduced Vivian to an effeminate-looking, perfumed young man, with a handsome, unmeaning face and very white hands; in short, as dapper a little diplomatist as ever tattled about the Congress of Verona, smirked at Lady Almack's supper after the Opera, or vowed 'that Richmond Terrace was a most convenient situation for official men.'

'We have had it with us some time before the public received it,' said the future under-secretary, with a look at once condescending and conceited.

'Have you?' said Vivian: 'well, it does your office credit. It is a singular thing that Canning and Croker are the only official men who can write grammar.'

The dismayed young gentleman of the Foreign Office was about to mince a repartee, when Vivian left his seat, for he had a great deal of business to transact. 'Mr. Leverton,' said he, accosting a flourishing grazier, 'I have received a letter from my friend, M. De Noé. He is desirous of purchasing some Leicestershires for his estate in Burgundy. Pray, may I take the liberty of introducing his agent to you?'

Mr. Leverton was delighted.

'I also wanted to see you about some other little business. Let me see, what was it? Never mind, I will take my wine here, if you can make room for me; I shall remember it, I dare say, soon. Oh! by-the-bye: ah! that was it. Stapylton Toad; Mr. Stapylton Toad; I want to know all about Mr. Stapylton Toad. I dare say you can tell me. A friend of mine intends to consult him on some parliamentary business, and he wishes to know something about him before he calls.'

We will condense, for the benefit of the reader, the imformation of Mr. Leverton.

Stapylton Toad had not the honour of being acquainted with his father's name; but as the son found himself, at an early age, apprenticed to a solicitor of eminence, he was of opinion that his parent must have been respectable. Respectable! mysterious word! Stapylton was a diligent and faithful clerk, but was

not so fortunate in his apprenticeship as the celebrated Whittington, for his master had no daughter and many sons; in consequence of which, Stapylton, not being able to become his master's partner, became his master's rival.

On the door of one of the shabbiest houses in Jermyn Street the name of Mr. Stapylton Toad for a long time figured, magnificently engraved on a broad brass plate. There was nothing however, otherwise, in the appearance of the establishment, which indicated that Mr. Toad's progress was very rapid, or his professional career extraordinarily prosperous. In an outward office one solitary clerk was seen, oftener stirring his office fire than wasting his master's ink; and Mr. Toad was known by his brother attorneys as a gentleman who was not recorded in the courts as ever having conducted a single cause. In a few years, however, a story was added to the Jermyn Street abode, which, new pointed and new painted, began to assume a mansion-like appearance. The house-door was also thrown open, for the solitary clerk no longer found time to answer the often agitated bell; and the eyes of the entering client were now saluted by a gorgeous green baize office door; the imposing appearance of which was only equalled by Mr. Toad's new private portal, splendid with a brass knocker and patent varnish. And now his brother attorneys began to wonder 'how Toad got on! and who Toad's clients were!'

A few more years rolled over, and Mr. Toad was seen riding in the Park at a classical hour, attended by a groom in a classical livery. And now 'the profession' wondered still more, and significant looks were interchanged by 'the respectable houses:' and

flourishing practitioners in the City shrugged up their shoulders, and talked mysteriously of 'money business,' and 'some odd work in annuities.' In spite, however, of the charitable surmises of his brother lawyers, it must be confessed that nothing of even an equivocal nature ever transpired against the character of the flourishing Mr. Toad, who, to complete the mortification of his less successful rivals, married, and at the same time moved from Jermyn Street to Cavendish Square. The new residence of Mr. Toad had previously been the mansion of a noble client, and one whom, as the world said, Mr. Toad 'had got out of difficulties.' This significant phrase will probably throw some light upon the nature of the mysterious business of our prosperous practitioner. Noble Lords who have been in difficulties will not much wonder at the prosperity of those who get them out.

About this time Mr. Toad became acquainted with Lord Mounteney, a nobleman in great distress, with fifty thousand per annum. His Lordship 'really did not know how he had got involved: he never gamed, he was not married, and his consequent expenses had never been unreasonable: he was not extraordinarily negligent; quite the reverse: was something of a man of business, remembered once looking over his accounts; and yet, in spite of his regular and correct career, found himself quite involved, and must leave England.'

The arrangement of the Mounteney property was the crowning stroke of Mr. Stapylton Toad's professional celebrity. His Lordship was not under the necessity of quitting England, and found himself in the course of five years in the receipt of a clear rental of five-and-twenty thousand per annum. His Lord-

ship was in raptures; and Stapylton Toad purchased an elegant villa in Surrey, and became a Member of Parliament. Goodburn Park, for such was the name of Mr. Toad's country residence, in spite of its double lodges and patent park paling, was not, to Mr. Toad, a very expensive purchase; for he 'took it off the hands' of a distressed client who wanted an immediate supply, 'merely to convenience him,' and, consequently, became the purchaser at about half its real value. 'Attorneys,' as Bustle the auctioneer says, 'have *such* opportunities!'

Mr. Toad's career in the House was as correct as his conduct out of it. After ten years' regular attendance, the boldest conjecturer would not have dared to define his political principles. It was a rule with Stapylton Toad never to commit himself. Once, indeed, he wrote an able pamphlet on the Corn Laws, which excited the dire indignation of the Political Economy Club. But Stapylton cared little for their subtle confutations and their loudly expressed contempt. He had obliged the country gentlemen of England, and ensured the return, at the next election, of Lord Mounteney's brother for the county. At this general election, also, Stapylton Toad's purpose in entering the House became rather more manifest; for it was found, to the surprise of the whole country, that there was scarcely a place in England; county, town, or borough; in which Mr. Stapylton Toad did not possess some influence. In short, it was discovered, that Mr. Stapylton Toad had 'a first-rate parliamentary business;' that nothing could be done without his co-operation, and everything with it. In spite of his prosperity, Stapylton had the good sense never to retire from business, and even to refuse a baronetcy;

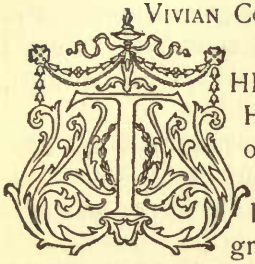
on condition, however, that it should be offered to his son.

Stapylton, like the rest of mankind, had his weak points. The late Marquess of Almack's was wont to manage him very happily, and Toad was always introducing that minister's opinion of his importance. '"My time is quite at your service, General," although the poor dear Marquess used to say, "Mr. Stapylton Toad, your time is mine." He knew the business I had to get through!' The family portraits also, in ostentatious frames, now adorned the dining-room of his London mansion; and it was amusing to hear the worthy M.P. dilate upon his likeness to his respected father.

'You see, my Lord,' Stapylton would say, pointing to a dark, dingy picture of a gentleman in a rich court dress, 'you see, my Lord, it is not in a very good light, and it certainly is a very dark picture, by Hudson; all Hudson's pictures were dark. But if I were six inches taller, and could hold the light just there, I think your Lordship would be astonished at the resemblance; but it's a dark picture, certainly it is dark; all Hudson's pictures were.'

CHAPTER XIV.

Vivian Conciliates Mrs. Million.



HE Cavaliers have left the ancient Hall, and the old pictures frown only upon empty tables. The Marquess immediately gained a seat by Mrs. Million, and was soon engrossed in deep converse with that illustrious lady. In one room, the most eminent and exclusive, headed by Mrs. Felix Lorraine, were now winding through the soothing mazes of a slow waltz, and now whirling, with all the rapidity of Eastern dervishes, to true double Wien time. In another saloon, the tedious tactics of quadrilles commanded the exertions of less civilised beings: here Liberal Snake, the celebrated political economist, was lecturing to a knot of alarmed country gentlemen; and there an Italian improvisatore poured forth to an admiring audience all the dulness of his inspiration. Vivian Grey was holding an earnest conversation in one of the recesses with Mr. Stapylton Toad. He had already charmed that worthy by the deep interest which he took in everything relating to elections and the House of Commons, and now they were hard at work on the Corn Laws. Although they agreed upon the main points, and Vivian's ideas upon this important subject had, of course, been adopted after study-

ing Mr. Toad's 'most luminous and convincing pamphlet,' still there were a few minor points on which Vivian 'was obliged to confess' that 'he did not exactly see his way.' Mr. Toad was astonished, but argumentative, and, of course, in due time, had made a convert of his companion; 'a young man,' as he afterwards remarked to Lord Mounteney, 'in whom he knew not which most to admire, the soundness of his own views, or the candour with which he treated those of others.' If you wish to win a man's heart, allow him to confute you.

'I think, Mr. Grey, you must admit that my definition of labour is the correct one?' said Mr. Toad, looking earnestly in Vivian's face, his finger just presuming to feel a button.

'That exertion of mind or body which is not the involuntary effect of the influence of natural sensations,' slowly repeated Vivian, as if his whole soul was concentrated in each monosyllable. 'Y-e-s, Mr. Toad, I do admit it.'

'Then, my dear sir, the rest follows of course,' triumphantly exclaimed the member; 'don't you see it?'

'Although I admit the correctness of your definition, Mr. Toad, I am not free to confess that I am ex-act-ly convinced of the soundness of your conclusion,' said Vivian, in a musing mood.

'But, my dear sir, I am surprised that you don't see that——'

'Stop, Mr. Toad,' eagerly exclaimed Vivian; 'I see my error. I misconceived your meaning: you are right, sir; your definition is correct.'

'I was confident that I should convince you, Mr. Grey.'

'This conversation, I assure you, Mr. Toad, has been to me a peculiarly satisfactory one. Indeed, sir, I have long wished to have the honour of making your acquaintance. When but a boy, I remember, at my father's table, the late Marquess of Almack's——'

'Yes, Mr. Grey.'

'One of the ablest men, Mr. Toad, after all, that this country ever produced.'

'Oh, poor dear man!'

'I remember his observing to a friend of mine, who was at that time desirous of getting into the House: "Hargrave," said his Lordship, "if you want any information upon points of practical politics;" that was his phrase; you remember, Mr. Toad, that his Lordship was peculiar in his phrases?'

'Oh! yes, poor dear man; but you were observing Mr. Grey——'

'Ay, ay! "If you want any information," said his Lordship, "on such points, there is only one man in the kingdom whom you should consult, and he is one of the soundest heads I know, and that is Stapylton Toad, the member for Mounteney;" you know you were in for Mounteney, then, Mr. Toad.'

'I was, and accepted the Chilterns to make room for Augustus Clay, Ernest Clay's brother, who was so involved, that the only way to keep him out of the House of Correction was to get him into the House of Commons. But the Marquess said so, eh?'

'Ay, and much more, which I scarcely can remember;' and then followed a long dissertation on the character of the noble statesman, and his views as to the agricultural interest, and the importance of the agricultural interest; and then a delicate hint was thrown out as to 'how delightful it would be to write

a pamphlet together' on this mighty agricultural interest; and then came a panegyric on the character of country gentlemen, and English yeomen, and the importance of keeping up the old English spirit in the peasantry, &c. &c. &c. &c.; and then, when Vivian had led Mr. Toad to deliver a splendid and patriotic oration on this point, he 'just remembered (quite apropos to the sentiments which Mr. Toad had just delivered, and which, he did not hesitate to say, "did equal honour to his head and heart") that there was a little point, which, if it was not trespassing too much on Mr. Toad's attention, he would just submit to him;' and then he mentioned poor John Conyers's case, although 'he felt convinced, from Mr. Toad's well-known benevolent character, that it was quite unnecessary for him to do so, as he felt assured that it would be remedied immediately it fell under his cognisance; but then Mr. Toad had really so much business to transact, that perhaps these slight matters might occasionally not be submitted to him,' &c. &c. &c.

What could Stapylton Toad do but, after a little amiable grumbling about 'bad system and bad precedent,' promise everything that Vivian Grey required?

'Mr. Vivian Grey,' said Mrs. Felix Lorraine, 'I cannot understand why you have been talking to Mr. Toad so long. Will you waltz?'

Before Vivian could answer, a tittering, so audible that it might almost be termed a shout, burst forth from the whole room. Cynthia Courtown had stolen behind Lord Alhambra, as he was sitting on an ottoman à la Turque, and had folded a cashmere shawl round his head with a most Oriental tie. His Lord-

ship, who, notwithstanding his eccentricities, was really a very amiable man, bore his blushing honours with a gracious dignity worthy of a descendant of the Abencerrages. The sensation which this incident occasioned favoured Vivian's escape from Mrs. Felix, for he had not left Mr. Stapylton Toad with any intention of waltzing.

But he had hardly escaped from the waltzers ere he found himself in danger of being involved in a much more laborious duty; for now he stumbled on the Political Economist, and he was earnestly requested by the contending theorists to assume the office of moderator. Emboldened by his success, Liberal Snake had had the hardihood to attack a personage of whose character he was not utterly ignorant, but on whom he was extremely desirous of 'making an impression.' This important person was Sir Christopher Mowbray, who, upon the lecturer presuming to inform him 'what rent was,' damned himself several times from sheer astonishment at the impudence of the fellow. I don't wish to be coarse, but Sir Christopher is a great man, and the sayings of great men, particularly when they are representative of the sentiment of a species, should not pass unrecorded.

Sir Christopher Mowbray is member for the county of——; and member for the county he intends to be next election, although he is in his seventy-ninth year, for he can still follow a fox with as plucky a heart and with as stout a voice as any squire in Christendom. Sir Christopher, it must be confessed, is rather peculiar in his ideas. His grandson, Peregrine Mowbray, who is as pert a genius as the applause of a common-room ever yet spoiled, and as sublime an orator as the cheerings of the Union ever

yet inspired, says 'the Baronet is not up to the nineteenth century;' and perhaps this phrase will give the reader a more significant idea of Sir Christopher Mowbray than a character as long and as laboured as the most perfect of my Lord Clarendon's. The truth is, the good Baronet had no idea of 'liberal principles,' or anything else of that school. His most peculiar characteristic is a singular habit which he has got of styling political economists French Smugglers. Nobody has ever yet succeeded in extracting a reason from him for this singular appellation, and even if you angle with the most exquisite skill for the desired definition, Sir Christopher immediately salutes you with a volley of oaths, and damns French wines, Bible Societies, and Mr. Huskisson. Sir Christopher for half a century has supported in the senate, with equal sedulousness and silence, the constitution and the corn laws; he is perfectly aware of 'the present perilous state of the country,' and watches with great interest all 'the plans and plots' of this enlightened age. The only thing which he does not exactly comprehend is the London University. This affair really puzzles the worthy gentleman, who could as easily fancy a county member not being a freeholder as an university not being at Oxford or Cambridge. Indeed to this hour the old gentleman believes that the old business is 'a hoax;' and if you tell him that, far from the plan partaking of the visionary nature he conceives, there are actually four acres of very valuable land purchased near White Conduit House for the erection, and that there is little apprehension that, in the course of a century, the wooden poles which are now stuck about the ground will not be as fair and flourishing as the most leafy bowers of New College

Gardens, the old gentleman looks up to heaven, as if determined not to be taken in, and leaning back in his chair, sends forth a sceptical and smiling 'No! no! no! that won't do.'

Vivian extricated himself with as much grace as possible from the toils of the Economist, and indeed, like a skilful general, turned this little rencontre to account in accomplishing the very end for the attainment of which he had declined waltzing with Mrs. Felix Lorraine.

'My dear Lord,' said Vivian, addressing the Marquess, who was still by the side of Mrs. Million, 'I am going to commit a most ungallant act; but you great men must pay a tax for your dignity. I am going to disturb you. You are wanted by half the county! What could possibly induce you ever to allow a Political Economist to enter Château Desir? There are, at least, three baronets and four squires in despair, writhing under the tortures of Liberal Snake. They have deputed me to request your assistance, to save them from being defeated in the presence of half their tenantry; and I think, my lord,' said Vivian, with a serious voice, 'if you could possibly contrive to interfere, it would be desirable. That lecturing knave never knows when to stop, and he is actually insulting men before whom, after all, he ought not dare to open his lips. I see that your Lordship is naturally not very much inclined to quit your present occupation, in order to act moderator to a set of brawlers; but come, you shall not be quite sacrificed to the county. I will give up the waltz in which I was engaged, and keep your seat until your return.'

The Marquess, who was always 'keeping up county influence,' was very shocked at the obstrep-

erous conduct of Liberal Snake. Indeed he had viewed the arrival of this worthy with no smiling countenance, but what could he say, as he came in the suit of Lord Pert, who was writing, with the lecturer's assistance, a little pamphlet on the Currency? Apologising to Mrs. Million, and promising to return as soon as possible and lead her to the music-room, the Marquess retired, with the determination of annihilating one of the stoutest members of the Political Economy Club.

Vivian began by apologising to Mrs. Million for disturbing her progress to the Hall by his sudden arrival before dinner; and then for a quarter of an hour poured forth the usual quantity of piquant anecdotes and insidious compliments. Mrs. Million found Vivian's conversation no disagreeable relief to the pompous prosiness of his predecessor.

And now, having succeeded in commanding Mrs. Million's attention by that general art of pleasing which was for all the world, and which was, of course, formed upon his general experience of human nature, Vivian began to make his advances to Mrs. Million's feelings by a particular art of pleasing; that is, an art which was for the particular person alone whom he was at any time addressing, and which was founded on his particular knowledge of that person's character.

'How beautiful the old Hall looked to-day! It is a scene which can only be met with in ancient families.'

'Ah! there is nothing like old families!' remarked Mrs. Million, with all the awkward feelings of a parvenue.

'Do you think so?' said Vivian; 'I once thought

so myself, but I confess that my opinion is greatly changed. After all, what is noble blood? My eye is now resting on a crowd of nobles; and yet, being among them, do we treat them in a manner differing in any way from that which we should employ to individuals of a lower caste who were equally uninteresting?'

'Certainly not,' said Mrs. Million.

'The height of the ambition of the less exalted ranks is to be noble, because they conceive to be noble implies to be superior; associating in their minds, as they always do, a pre-eminence over their equals. But to be noble among nobles, where is the pre-eminence?'

'Where indeed?' said Mrs. Million; and she thought of herself, sitting the most considered personage in this grand castle, and yet with sufficiently base blood flowing in her veins.

'And thus, in the highest circles,' continued Vivian, 'a man is of course not valued because he is a Marquess or a Duke; but because he is a great warrior, or a great statesman, or very fashionable, or very witty. In all classes but the highest, a peer, however unbefriended by nature or by fortune, becomes a man of a certain rate of consequence; but to be a person of consequence in the highest class requires something else besides high blood.'

'I quite agree with you in your sentiments, Mr. Grey. Now what character or what situation in life would you choose, if you had the power of making your choice?'

'That is really a most metaphysical question. As is the custom of all young men, I have sometimes, in my reveries, imagined what I conceived to be a lot

of pure happiness: and yet Mrs. Million will perhaps be astonished that I was neither to be nobly born nor to acquire nobility; that I was not to be a statesman, or a poet, or a warrior, or a merchant, nor indeed any profession, not even a professional dandy.'

'Oh! love in a cottage, I suppose,' interrupted Mrs. Million.

'Neither love in a cottage, nor science in a cell.'

'Oh! pray tell me what it is.'

'What it is? Oh! Lord Mayor of London, I suppose; that is the only situation which answers to my oracular description.'

'Then you have been joking all this time!'

'Not at all. Come then, let us imagine this perfect lot. In the first place, I would be born in the middle classes of society, or even lower, because I would wish my character to be impartially developed. I would be born to no hereditary prejudices, no hereditary passions. My course in life should not be carved out by the example of a grandfather, nor my ideas modelled to a preconceived system of family perfection. Do you like my first principle, Mrs. Million?'

'I must hear everything before I give an opinion.'

'When, therefore, my mind was formed, I would wish to become the proprietor of a princely fortune.'

'Yes!' eagerly exclaimed Mrs. Million.

'And now would come the moral singularity of my fate. If I had gained this fortune by commerce, or in any other similar mode, my disposition, before the creation of this fortune, would naturally have been formed, and been permanently developed; and my mind would have been similarly affected, had I succeeded to some ducal father; for I should then, in

all probability, have inherited some family line of conduct, both moral and political. But under the circumstances I have imagined, the result would be far different. I should then be in the singular situation of possessing, at the same time, unbounded wealth, and the whole powers and natural feelings of my mind unoppressed and unshackled. Oh! how splendid would be my career! I would not allow the change in my condition to exercise any influence on my natural disposition. I would experience the same passions and be subject to the same feelings, only they should be exercised and influential in a wider sphere. Then would be seen the influence of great wealth, directed by a disposition similar to that of the generality of men, inasmuch as it had been formed like that of the generality of men; and consequently, one much better acquainted with their feelings, their habits, and their wishes. Such a lot would indeed be princely! Such a lot would infallibly ensure the affection and respect of the great majority of mankind; and, supported by them, what should I care if I were misunderstood by a few fools and abused by a few knaves?'

Here came the Marquess to lead the lady to the concert. As she quitted her seat, a smile, beaming with graciousness, rewarded her youthful companion. 'Ah!' thought Mrs. Million, 'I go to the concert but leave sweeter music than can possibly meet me there. What is the magic of these words? It is not flattery; such is not the language of Miss Gusset! It is not a rifacimento of compliments; such is not the style with which I am saluted by the Duke of Doze and the Earl of Leatherdale! Apparently I have heard a young philosopher delivering his sentiments upon an abstract

point in human life; and yet have I not listened to a brilliant apology for my own character, and a triumphant defence of my own conduct? Of course it was unintentional; and yet how agreeable to be unintentionally defended!' So mused Mrs. Million, and she made a thousand vows not to let a day pass over without obtaining a pledge from Vivian Grey to visit her on their return to the metropolis.

Vivian remained in his seat for some time after the departure of his companion. 'On my honour, I have half a mind to desert my embryo faction and number myself in her gorgeous retinue. Let me see. What part should I act? her secretary, or her toad-eater, or her physician, or her cook? or shall I be her page? Methinks I should make a pretty page, and hand a chased goblet as gracefully as any monkey that ever bent his knee in a lady's chamber. Well! at any rate, there is this chance to be kept back, as the gambler does his last trump, or the cunning fencer his last ruse.'

He rose to offer his arm to some stray fair one; for crowds were now hurrying to pine-apples and lobster salads: that is to say, supper was ready in the Long Gallery.

In a moment Vivian's arm was locked in that of Mrs. Felix Lorraine.

'Oh, Mr. Grey, I have got a much better ghost story than even that of the Leyden Professor for you; but I am so wearied with waltzing that I must tell it you to-morrow. How came you to be so late this morning? Have you been paying many calls to-day? I quite missed you at dinner. Do you think Ernest Clay handsome? I dare not repeat what Lady Scrope said of you! You are an admirer of Lady Julia

Knighton, I believe? I do not much like this plan of supping in the Long Gallery; it is a favourite locale of mine, and I have no idea of my private promenade being invaded by the uninteresting presence of trifles and Italian creams. Have you been telling Mrs. Million that she was very witty?' asked Vivian's companion, with a significant look.

CHAPTER XV.

A Conclave of Toadies.

WEET reader! you know what a Toady is? That agreeable animal which you meet every day in civilised society. But perhaps you have not speculated very curiously upon this interesting race. So much the worse! for you cannot live many lustres without finding it of some service to be a little acquainted with their habits.

The world in general is under a mistake as to the nature of these vermin. They are by no means characterised by that similarity of disposition for which your common observer gives them credit. There are Toadies of all possible natures.

There is your Common-place Toady, who merely echoes its feeder's common-place observations. There is your Playing-up Toady, who, unconscious to its feeder, is always playing up to its feeder's weaknesses; and, as the taste of that feeder varies, accordingly provides its cates and confitures. A little bit of scandal for a dashing widow, or a pious little hymn for a sainted one; the secret history of a newly discovered gas for a May Fair feeder, and an interest-

ing anecdote about a Newgate bobcap or a Penitentiary apron for a charitable one. Then there is your Drawing-out Toady, who omits no opportunity of giving you a chance of being victorious in an argument where there is no contest, and a dispute where there is no difference; and then there is——but we detest essay writing, so we introduce you at once to a party of these vermin. If you wish to enjoy a curious sight, you must watch the Toadies when they are unembarrassed by the almost perpetual presence of their breeders; when they are animated by the 'spirit of freedom;' when, like Curran's Negro, the chain bursts by the impulse of their swelling veins. The great singularity is the struggle between their natural and their acquired feelings: the eager opportunity which they seize of revenging their voluntary bondage, by their secret taunts, on their adopted task-masters, and the servility which they habitually mix up even with their scandal. Like veritable grimalkins, they fawn upon their victims previous to the festival; compliment them upon the length of their whiskers and the delicacy of their limbs prior to excoriating them, and dwelling on the flavour of their crashed bones. 'Tis a beautiful scene, and ten thousand times more piquant than the humours of a Servants' Hall, or the most grotesque and glorious moments of high life below stairs.

'Dear Miss Graves,' said Miss Gusset, 'you can't imagine how terrified I was at that horrible green parrot flying upon my head! I declare it pulled out three locks of hair.'

'Horrible green parrot, my dear madam! Why, it was sent to my Lady by Prince Xtmnprqtosklw, and never shall I forget the agitation we were in about

that parrot. I thought it would never have got to the Château, for the Prince could only send his carriage with it as far as Toadcaster. Luckily my Lady's youngest brother, who was staying at Desir, happened to get drowned at the time; and so Davenport, very clever of him! sent her on in my Lord Dormer's hearse.'

'In the hearse! Good heavens, Miss Graves! How could you think of green parrots at such an awful moment? I should have been in fits for three days; eh! Dr. Sly?'

'Certainly you would, madame: your nerves are very delicate.'

'Well! I, for my part, never could see much use in giving up to one's feelings. It is all very well for commoners,' rather rudely exclaimed the Marchioness's Toady; 'but we did not choose to expose ourselves to the servants when the old General died this year. Everything went on as usual. Her Ladyship attended Almack's; my Lord took his seat in the House; and I looked in at Lady Doubtful's, where we do not visit, but where the Marchioness wishes to be civil.'

'We do not visit Lady Doubtful either,' replied Miss Gusset: 'she had not a card for our fête champêtre. I was so sorry you were not in town. It was so delightful!'

'Do tell me who was there? I quite long to know all about it. I saw some account of it. Everything seemed to go off so well. Do tell me who was there?'

'Oh! there was plenty of Royalty at the head of the list. Really I cannot go into particulars, but everybody was there who is anybody; eh! Dr. Sly?'

'Certainly, madam. The pines were most admir-

able. There are few people for whom I entertain a higher esteem than Mr. Gunter.'

'The Marchioness seems very fond of her parrot, Miss Graves; but she is a sweet woman!'

'Oh, a dear, amiable creature! but I cannot think how she can bear the eternal screaming of that noisy bird.'

'Nor I, indeed. Well, thank goodness, Mrs. Million has no pets; eh! Dr. Sly?'

'Certainly. I am clearly of opinion that it cannot be wholesome to have so many animals about a house. Besides which, I have noticed that the Marchioness always selects the nicest morsels for that little poodle; and I am also clearly of opinion, Miss Graves, that the fit it had the other day arose from repletion.'

'I have no doubt of it in the world. She consumes three pounds of arrowroot weekly and two pounds of the finest loaf sugar, which I have the trouble of grating every Monday morning. Mrs. Million appears to be a most amiable woman, Miss Gusset?'

'Quite perfection; so charitable, so intellectual, such a soul! It is a pity, though, her manner is so abrupt; she really does not appear to advantage sometimes; eh! Dr. Sly?'

The Toady's Toady bowed assent as usual. 'Well,' rejoined Miss Graves, 'that is rather a fault of the dear Marchioness, a little want of consideration for another's feelings; but she means nothing.'

'Oh, no! nor Mrs. Million, dear creature! She means nothing; though I dare say, not knowing her so well as we do; eh! Dr. Sly? you were a little surprised at the way in which she spoke to me at dinner.'

'All people have their oddities, Miss Gusset. I am sure the Marchioness is not aware how she tries my patience about that little wretch Julie. I had to rub her with warm flannels for an hour and a half before the fire this morning; that is that Vivian Grey's doing.'

'Who is this Mr. Grey, Miss Graves?'

'Who, indeed! Some young man the Marquess has picked up, and who comes lecturing here about poodles and parrots, and thinking himself quite Lord Paramount, I can assure you. I am surprised that the Marchioness, who is a most sensible woman, can patronise such conduct a moment; but whenever she begins to see through him the young gentleman has always got a story about a bracelet, or a bandeau, and quite turns her head.'

'Very disagreeable, I am sure.'

'Some people are so easily managed! By-the-bye, Miss Gusset, who could have advised Mrs. Million to wear crimson? So large as she is, it does not at all suit her. I suppose it's a favourite colour.'

'Dear Miss Graves, you are always so insinuating. What can Miss Graves mean; eh! Dr. Sly?'

A Lord Burleigh shake of the head.

'Cynthia Courtown seems as lively as ever,' said Miss Gusset.

'Yes, lively enough; but I wish her manner was less brusque.'

'Brusque, indeed! you may well say so. She nearly pushed me down in the Hall; and when I looked as if I thought she might have given me a little more room, she tossed her head and said, "Beg pardon, never saw you!"'

'I wonder what Lord Alhambra sees in that girl?'

'Oh! those forward misses always take the men.'

'Well,' said Miss Graves, 'I have no notion that it will come to anything; I am sure, I, for one, hope not,' added she, with all a Toady's venom.

'The Marquess seems to keep a remarkably good table,' said the physician. 'There was a haunch to-day, which I really think was the finest haunch I ever met with; but that little move at dinner; it was, to say the least, very ill-timed.'

'Yes, that was Vivian Grey again,' said Miss Graves, very indignantly.

'So you have got the Beaconsfields here, Miss Graves! nice, unaffected, quiet people.'

'Yes, very quiet.'

'As you say, Miss Graves, very quiet, but a little heavy.'

'Yes, heavy enough.'

'If you had but seen the quantity of pine-apples that boy Dormer Stanhope devoured at our fête champêtre! but I have the comfort of knowing that they made him very ill; eh! Dr. Sly?'

'Oh! he learnt that from his uncle,' said Miss Graves; 'it is quite disgusting to see how that Vivian Grey encourages him.'

'What an elegant, accomplished woman Mrs. Felix Lorraine seems to be, Miss Graves! I suppose the Marchioness is very fond of her?'

'Oh, yes; the Marchioness is so good-natured that I dare say she thinks very well of Mrs. Felix Lorraine. She thinks well of everyone; but I believe Mrs. Felix is rather a greater favourite with the Marquess.'

'O——h!' drawled out Miss Gusset with a very significant tone. 'I suppose she is one of your play-

ing-up ladies. I think you told me she was only on a visit here.'

'A pretty long visit, though, for a sister-in-law, if sister-in-law she be. As I was saying to the Marchioness the other day, when Mrs. Felix offended her so violently by trampling on the dear little Julie, if it came into a court of justice I should like to see the proof; that's all. At any rate, it is pretty evident that Mr. Lorraine has had enough of his bargain.'

'Quite evident, I think; eh! Dr. Sly? Those German women never make good English wives,' continued Miss Gusset, with all a Toady's patriotism.

'Talking of wives, did not you think Lady Julia spoke very strangely of Sir Peter after dinner to-day? I hate that Lady Julia, if it be only for petting Vivian Grey so.'

'Yes, indeed, it is quite enough to make one sick; eh! Dr. Sly?'

The doctor shook his head mournfully, remembering the haunch.

'They say Ernest Clay is in sad difficulties, Miss Gusset.'

'Well, I always expected his dash would end in that. Those wild harum-scarum men are monstrous disagreeable. I like a person of some reflection; eh! Dr. Sly?'

Before the doctor could bow his usual assent there entered a pretty little page, very daintily attired in a fancy dress of green and silver. Twirling his richly-chased dirk with one tiny white hand, and at the same time playing with a pet curl which was picturesquely flowing over his forehead, he advanced with ambling gait to Miss Gusset, and, in a mincing

voice and courtly phrase, summoned her to the imperial presence.

The lady's features immediately assumed the expression which befitted the approaching interview, and in a moment Miss Graves and the physician were left alone.

'Very amiable young woman Miss Gusset appears to be, Dr. Sly?'

'Oh! the most amiable being in the world; I owe her the greatest obligations.'

'So gentle in her manners.'

'O yes, so gentle.'

'So considerate for everybody.'

'Oh, yes! so considerate,' echoed the Aberdeen M.D.

'I am afraid though, she must sometimes meet with people who do not exactly understand her character; such extraordinary consideration for others is sometimes liable to misconstruction.'

'Very sensibly remarked, Miss Graves. I am sure Miss Gusset means well; and that kind of thing is all very admirable in its way; but, but——'

'But what, Dr. Sly?'

'Why, I was merely going to hazard an observation, that according to my feelings, that is, to my own peculiar view of the case, I should prefer some people thinking more about their own business, and —and—but I mean nothing.'

'Oh, no, of course not, Dr. Sly! You know we always except our own immediate friends, at least when we can be sure they are our friends; but, as you were saying, or going to say, those persons who are so very anxious about other people's affairs are not always the most agreeable persons in the world

to live with. It certainly did strike me that that interference of Miss Gusset's about Julie to-day was, to say the least, very odd.'

'Oh, my dear madam! when you know her as well as I do, you will see that she is always ready to put in a word.'

'Well! do you know, Dr. Sly, between ourselves, that was exactly my impression; and she is then very — very — I do not exactly mean to say meddling or inquisitive; but, but you understand me, Dr. Sly?'

'Perfectly; and if I were to speak my mind, which I do not hesitate to do in confidence to you, Miss Graves, I really should say that she is the most jealous, irritable, malicious, meddling, and at the same time fawning, disposition that I ever met with in the whole course of my life, and I speak from experience.'

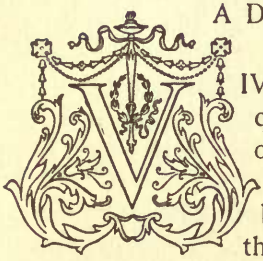
'Well, do you know, Dr. Sly, from all I have seen, that was exactly my impression; therefore I have been particularly careful not to commit myself to such a person.'

'Ah! Miss Graves! if all ladies were like you! O——h!'

'My dear Dr. Sly!'

CHAPTER XVI.

A Diplomatic Dinner.



IVIAN had duly acquainted the Marquess with the successful progress of his negotiations with their intended partizans, and Lord Carabas had himself conversed with them singly on the important subject. It was thought proper, however, in this stage of the proceedings, that the persons interested should meet together; and so the two Lords, and Sir Berdmore, and Vivian were invited to dine with the Marquess alone, and in his library.

There was abundance of dumb waiters and other inventions by which the ease of the guests might be consulted, without risking even their secret looks to the gaze of liveried menials. The Marquess's gentleman sat in an ante-chamber, in case human aid might be necessary, and everything, as his Lordship averred, was 'on the same system as the Cabinet Dinners.'

In the ancient kingdom of England it hath ever been the custom to dine previously to transacting business. This habit is one of those few which are not contingent upon the mutable fancies of fashion, and at this day we see Cabinet Dinners and Vestry

Dinners alike proving the correctness of our assertion. Whether the custom really expedites the completion or the general progress of the business which gives rise to it, is a grave question, which we do not feel qualified to decide. Certain it is that very often, after the *dinner,* an appointment is made for the transaction of the *business* on the following morning: at the same time it must be remembered that, had it not been for the opportunity which the banquet afforded of developing the convivial qualities of the guests, and drawing out, by the assistance of generous wine, their most kindly sentiments and most engaging feelings, it is very probable that the appointment for the transaction of the business would never have been made at all.

There certainly was every appearance that 'the great business,' as the Marquess styled it, would not be very much advanced by the cabinet dinner at Château Desir. For, in the first place, the table was laden 'with every delicacy of the season,' and really, when a man is either going to talk sense, fight a duel, or make his will, nothing should be seen at dinner save cutlets and the lightest Bordeaux. And, in the second place, it must be confessed, that when it came to the point of all the parties interested meeting, the Marquess's courage somewhat misgave him. Not that any particular reason occurred to him which would have induced him to yield one jot of the theory of his sentiments, but the putting them in practice rather made him nervous. In short, he was as convinced as ever that he was an ill-used man, of great influence and abilities; but then he remembered his agreeable sinecure and his dignified office, and he might not succeed. The thought did not please.

But here they were all assembled; receding was impossible; and so the Marquess took a glass of claret, and felt more courageous.

'My Lords and Gentlemen,' he began, 'although I have myself taken the opportunity of communicating to you singly my thoughts upon a certain subject, and although, if I am rightly informed, my excellent young friend has communicated to you more fully upon that subject; yet, my Lords and Gentlemen, I beg to remark that this is the first time that we have collectively assembled to consult on the possibility of certain views, upon the propriety of their nature, and the expediency of their adoption.' (Here the claret passed.) 'The present state of parties,' the Marquess continued, 'has doubtless for a long time engaged your attention. It is very peculiar, and although the result has been gradually arrived at, it is nevertheless, now that it is realised, startling, and not, I apprehend, very satisfactory. There are few distinctions now between the two sides of the House of Commons, very different from the times in which most, I believe all of us, my Lords and Gentlemen, were members of that assembly. The question then naturally arises, why a certain body of individuals, who now represent no opinions, should arrogate to themselves the entire government and control of the country? A second question would occur, how they contrive to succeed in such an assumption? They succeed clearly because the party who placed them in power, because they represented certain opinions, still continue to them their support. Some of the most influential members of that party, I am bold to say, may be found in this room. I don't know, if the boroughs of Lord Courtown and Lord Beaconsfield were with-

drawn at a critical division, what might be the result. I am quite sure that if the forty country gentlemen who follow, I believe I am justified in saying, our friend Sir Berdmore, and wisely follow him, were to declare their opposition to any particular tax, the present men would be beaten, as they have been beaten before. I was myself a member of the government when so beaten, and I know what Lord Liverpool said the next morning. Lord Liverpool said the next morning, "Forty country gentlemen, if they choose, might repeal every tax in the Budget." Under these circumstances, my Lords and Gentlemen, it becomes us, in my opinion, to consider our situation. I am far from wishing to witness any general change, or, indeed, very wide reconstruction of the present administration. I think the interests of the country require that the general tenor of their system should be supported; but there are members of that administration whose claims to that distinction appear to me more than questionable, while at the same time they are individuals excluded, personages of great influence and recognized talents, who ought no longer, in my opinion, to occupy a position in the background. Mr. Vivian Grey, a gentleman whom I have the honour to call my particular friend, and who, I believe, has had already the pleasure of incidentally conversing with you on the matters to which I have referred, has given great attention to this important subject. He is a younger man than any of us, and certainly has much better lungs than I have. I will take the liberty, therefore, of requesting him to put the case in its completeness before us.'

A great deal of 'desultory conversation,' as it is styled, relative to the great topic of debate, now oc-

curred. When the blood of the party was tolerably warmed, Vivian addressed them. The tenor of his oration may be imagined. He developed the new political principles, demonstrated the mistake under the baneful influence of which they had so long suffered, promised them place, and power, and patronage, and personal consideration, if they would only act on the principles which he recommended, in the most flowing language and the most melodious voice in which the glories of ambition were ever yet chaunted. There was a buzz of admiration when the flattering music ceased; the Marquess smiled triumphantly, as if to say, 'Didn't I tell you he was a monstrous clever fellow?' and the whole business seemed settled. Lord Courtown gave in a bumper, '*Mr. Vivian Grey, and success to his maiden speech!*' and Vivian replied by proposing '*The New Union!*' At last, Sir Berdmore, the coolest of them all, raised his voice: 'He quite agreed with Mr. Grey in the principles which he had developed; and, for his own part, he was free to confess that he had perfect confidence in that gentleman's very brilliant abilities, and augured from their exertion complete and triumphant success. At the same time, he felt it his duty to remark to their Lordships, and also to that gentleman, that the House of Commons was a new scene to him; and he put it, whether they were quite convinced that they were sufficiently strong as regarded talent in that assembly. He could not take it upon himself to offer to become the leader of the party. Mr. Grey might be capable of undertaking that charge, but still, it must be remembered that in that assembly he was as yet untried. He made no apology to Mr. Grey for speaking his mind so freely; he was

sure that his motives could not be misinterpreted. If their Lordships, on the whole, were of opinion that this charge should be entrusted to him, he, Sir Berdmore, having the greatest confidence in Mr. Grey's abilities, would certainly support him to the utmost.'

'He can do anything,' said the Marquess.

'He is a surprising clever man!' said Lord Courtown.

'He is a surprising clever man!' echoed Lord Beaconsfield.

'Stop, my Lords,' said Vivian; 'your good opinion deserves my gratitude, but these important matters do indeed require a moment's consideration. I trust that Sir Berdmore Scrope does not imagine that I am the vain idiot to be offended at his most excellent remarks, even for a moment. Are we not met here for the common good, and to consult for the success of the common cause? Whatever my talents are, they are at your service, and in your service will I venture anything; but surely, my Lords, you will not unnecessarily entrust this great business to a raw hand! I need only aver that I am ready to follow any leader who can play his great part in a becoming manner.'

'Noble!' said the Marquess.

But who was the leader to be? Sir Berdmore frankly confessed that he had none to propose; and the Viscount and the Baron were quite silent.

'Gentlemen!' exclaimed the Marquess, 'Gentlemen! there is a man who could do our bidding.' The eyes of every guest were fixed on the haranguing host.

'Gentlemen, fill your glasses. I give you our leader, Mr. Frederick Cleveland!'

'Cleveland!' every one exclaimed. A glass of claret fell from Lord Courtown's hand; Lord Beacons-

field stopped as he was about to fill his glass, and stood gaping at the Marquess with the decanter in his hand; and Sir Berdmore stared on the table, as men do when something unexpected and astounding has occurred at dinner which seems past all their management.

'Cleveland!' exclaimed the guests.

'I should as soon have expected you to have given us Lucifer!' said Lord Courtown.

'Or the present Secretary!' said Lord Beaconsfield.

'Or yourself,' said Sir Berdmore.

'And does any one maintain that Frederick Cleveland is not capable of driving out a much stronger Government than he will have to cope with?' demanded the Marquess with a rather fierce air.

'We do not deny Mr. Cleveland's powers, my Lord; we only humbly beg to suggest that it appears to us that, of all the persons in the world, the man with whom Mr. Cleveland would be least inclined to coalesce would be the Marquess of Carabas.'

The Marquess looked somewhat blank.

'Gentlemen,' said Vivian, 'do not despair; it is enough for me to know that there is a man who is capable of doing our work. Be he animate man or incarnate fiend, provided he can be found within this realm, I pledge myself that within ten days he is drinking my noble friend's health at this very board.'

The Marquess said, 'Bravo,' the rest smiled and rose from the table in some confusion. Little more was said on the 'great business.' The guests took refuge in coffee and a glass of liqueur. The pledge was, however, apparently accepted, and Lord Carabas and Vivian were soon left alone. The Marquess seemed agitated by Vivian's offer and engagement. 'This is

a grave business,' he said; 'you hardly know, my dear Vivian, what you have undertaken; but if anybody can succeed, you will. We must talk of this to-morrow. There are some obstacles, and I should once have thought, invincible. I cannot conceive what made me mention his name; but it has been often in my mind since you first spoke to me. You and he together, we might carry everything before us. But there are some obstacles; no doubt there are some obstacles. You heard what Courtown said, a man who does not make difficulties, and Beaconsfield, a man who does not say much. Courtown called him Lucifer. He is Lucifer. But, by Jove, you are the man to overcome obstacles. We must talk of it to-morrow. So now, my dear fellow, good night!'

'What have I done?' thought Vivian; 'I am sure that Lucifer may know, for I do not. This Cleveland is, I suppose, after all, but a man. I saw the feeble fools were wavering, and, to save all, made a leap in the dark. Well! is my skull cracked? *Nous verrons.* How hot either this room or my blood is! Come, for some fresh air (he opened the library window). How fresh and soft it is! Just the night for the balcony. Hah! music! I cannot mistake that voice. Singular woman! I will just walk on till I am beneath her window.'

Vivian accordingly proceeded along the balcony, which extended down one whole side of the Château. While he was looking at the moon he stumbled against some one. It was Colonel Delmington. He apologised to the militaire for treading on his toes, and wondered 'how the devil he got there!'

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

A Retired Politician.

FREDERICK CLEVELAND was educated at Eton and at Cambridge; and after having proved, both at the school and the University, that he possessed talents of a high order, he had the courage, in order to perfect them, to immure himself for three years in a German University. It was impossible, therefore, for two minds to have been cultivated on more contrary systems than those of Frederick Cleveland and Vivian Grey. The systems on which they had been educated were not, however, more discordant than the respective tempers of the pupils. With that of Vivian Grey the reader is now somewhat acquainted. It has been shown that he was one precociously convinced of the necessity of managing mankind, by studying their tempers and humouring their weaknesses. Cleveland turned from the Book of Nature with contempt, and although his was a mind of extraordinary acuteness, he was, at three-and-thirty, as ignorant of the work-

ings of the human heart as when, in the innocence of boyhood, he first reached Eton.

Although possessed of no fortune, from his connections and the reputation of his abilities, he entered Parliament at an early age. His success was eminent. It was at this period that he formed a great intimacy with the present Marquess of Carabas, then Under Secretary of State. His exertions for the party to which Mr. Under Secretary Lorraine belonged were unremitting; and it was mainly through their influence that a great promotion took place in the official appointments of the party. When the hour of reward came, Mr. Lorraine and his friends unfortunately forgot their youthful champion. He remonstrated, and they smiled: he reminded them of private friendship, and they answered him with political expediency. Mr. Cleveland went down to the House, and attacked his old co-mates in a spirit of unexampled bitterness. He examined in review the various members of the party that had deserted him. They trembled on their seats, while they writhed beneath the keenness of his satire: but when the orator came to Mr. President Lorraine, he flourished the tomahawk on high like a wild Indian chieftain; and the attack was so awfully severe, so overpowering, so annihilating, that even this hackneyed and hardened official trembled, turned pale, and quitted the House. Cleveland's triumph was splendid, but it was only for a night. Disgusted with mankind, he scouted the thousand offers of political connections which crowded upon him; and having succeeded in making an arrangement with his creditors, he accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.

By the interest of his friends he procured a judicial situation of sufficient emolument, but of local

duty; and to fulfil this duty he was obliged to reside in North Wales. The locality, indeed, suited him well, for he was sick of the world at nine-and-twenty; and, carrying his beautiful and newly-married wife from the world, which without him she could not love, Mr. Cleveland enjoyed all the luxuries of a cottage ornée in the most romantic part of the Principality. Here were born unto him a son and daughter, beautiful children, upon whom the father lavished all the affection which Nature had intended for the world.

Four years had Cleveland now passed in his solitude, an unhappy man. A thousand times during the first year of his retirement he cursed the moment of excitement which had banished him from the world; for he found himself without resources, and restless as a curbed courser. Like many men who are born to be orators, like Curran and like Fox, Cleveland was not blessed, or cursed, with the faculty of composition; and indeed, had his pen been that of a ready writer, pique would have prevented him from delighting or instructing a world whose nature he endeavoured to persuade himself was base, and whose applause ought, consequently, to be valueless. In the second year he endeavoured to while away his time by interesting himself in those pursuits which Nature has kindly provided for country gentlemen. Farming kept him alive for a while; but, at length, his was the prize ox; and, having gained a cup, he got wearied of kine too prime for eating, wheat too fine for the composition of the staff of life, and ploughs so ingeniously contrived that the very ingenuity prevented them from being useful. Cleveland was now seen wandering over the moors and mountains, with

a gun over his shoulder and a couple of dogs at his heels; but ennui returned in spite of his patent percussion: and so, at length, tired of being a sportsman, he almost became what he had fancied himself in an hour of passion, a misanthrope.

After having been closeted with Lord Carabas for a considerable time the morning after the cabinet dinner, Vivian left Château Desir.

He travelled night and day, until he arrived in the vicinity of Mr. Cleveland's abode. What was he to do now? After some deliberation, he despatched a note to Mr. Cleveland, informing him 'that he (Mr. Grey) was the bearer to Mr. Cleveland of a "communication of importance." Under the circumstances of the case, he observed that he had declined bringing any letters of introduction. He was quite aware, therefore, that he should have no right to complain if he had to travel back three hundred miles without having the honor of an interview; but he trusted that this necessary breach of etiquette would be overlooked.'

The note produced the desired effect, and an appointment was made for Mr. Grey to call at Kenrich Lodge on the following morning.

Vivian, as he entered the room, took a rapid glance at its master. Mr. Cleveland was tall and distinguished, with a face which might have been a model for manly beauty. He came forward to receive Vivian with a Newfoundland dog on one side and a large black greyhound on the other; and the two animals, after having elaborately examined the stranger, divided between them the luxuries of the rug. The reception which Mr. Cleveland gave our hero was cold and constrained; but it did not ap-

pear to be purposely uncivil, and Vivian flattered himself that his manner was not unusually stiff.

'I do not know whether I have the honour of addressing the son of Mr. Horace Grey?' said Mr. Cleveland, with a frowning countenance, which was intended to be courteous.

'I have that honour.'

'Your father, sir, is a most amiable and able man. I had the pleasure of his acquaintance when I was in London, many years ago, at a time when Mr. Vivian Grey was not entrusted, I rather imagine, with missions "of importance."' Although Mr. Cleveland smiled when he said this, his smile was anything but a gracious one. The subdued satire of his keen eye burst out for an instant, and he looked as if he would have said, 'Who is this younker who is trespassing upon my retirement?'

Vivian had, unbidden, seated himself by the side of Mr. Cleveland's library table; and, not knowing exactly how to proceed, was employing himself by making a calculation whether there were more black than white spots on the body of the old Newfoundland, who was now apparently happily slumbering.

'Well, sir!' continued the Newfoundland's master, 'the nature of your communication? I am fond of coming to the point.'

Now this was precisely the thing which Vivian had determined not to do; and so he diplomatised, in order to gain time. 'In stating, Mr. Cleveland, that the communication which I had to make was one of importance, I beg to be understood, that it was with reference merely to my opinion of its nature that that phrase was used, and not as relative to

the possible, or, allow me to say, the probable, opinion of Mr. Cleveland.'

'Well, sir!' said that gentleman, with a somewhat disappointed air.

'As to the purport or nature of the communication it is,' said Vivian, with one of his sweetest cadences and looking up to Mr. Cleveland's face with an eye expressive of all kindness, 'it is of a political nature.'

'Well, sir!' again exclaimed Cleveland, looking very anxious, and moving restlessly on his library chair.

'When we take into consideration, Mr. Cleveland, the present aspect of the political world, when we call to mind the present situation of the two great political parties, you will not be surprised, I feel confident, when I mention that certain personages have thought that the season was at hand when a move might be made in the political world with very considerable effect——'

'Mr. Grey, what am I to understand?' interrupted Mr. Cleveland, who began to suspect that the envoy was no greenhorn.

'I feel confident, Mr. Cleveland, that I am doing very imperfect justice to the mission with which I am entrusted; but, sir, you must be aware that the delicate nature of such disclosures, and——'

'Mr. Grey, I feel confident that you do not doubt my honour; and, as for the rest, the world has, I believe, some foolish tales about me; but, believe me, you shall be listened to with patience. I am certain that, whatever may be the communication, Mr. Vivian Grey is a gentleman who will do its merits justice.'

And now Vivian, having succeeded in exciting Cleveland's curiosity and securing himself the certainty of a hearing, and having also made a favourable impression, dropped the diplomatist altogether, and was explicit enough for a Spartan.

'Certain noblemen and gentlemen of eminence and influence, hitherto considered as props of the —— party, are about to take a novel and decided course next Session. It is to obtain the aid and personal co-operation of Mr. Cleveland that I am now in Wales.'

'Mr. Grey, I have promised to listen to you with patience: you are too young a man to know much, perhaps, of the history of so insignificant a personage as myself, otherwise you would have been aware that there is no subject in the world on which I am less inclined to converse than that of politics. If I were entitled to take such a liberty, I would recommend you to think of them as little as I do; but enough of this. Who is the mover of the party?'

'My Lord Courtown is a distinguished member of it.'

'Courtown, Courtown; powerful enough: but surely the good Viscount's skull is not exactly the head for the chief of a cabal?'

'There is my Lord Beaconsfield.'

'Powerful, too; but a dolt.'

'Well,' thought Vivian, 'it must out at last; and so to it boldly. And, Mr. Cleveland, there is little fear that we may secure the great influence and tried talents of the Marquess of Carabas.'

'The Marquess of Carabas!' almost shrieked Mr. Cleveland, as he started from his seat and paced the room with hurried steps; and the greyhound and the Newfoundland jumped up from the rug, shook them-

selves, growled, and then imitated their master in promenading the apartment, but with more dignified and stately paces. 'The Marquess of Carabas! Now, Mr. Grey, speak to me with the frankness which one gentleman should use to another; is the Marquess of Carabas privy to this application?'

'He himself proposed it.'

'Then he is baser than even I conceived. Mr. Grey, I am a man spare of my speech to those with whom I am unacquainted, and the world calls me a soured, malicious man. And yet, when I think for a moment that one so young as you are, endowed as I must suppose with no ordinary talents, and actuated as I will believe with a pure and honourable spirit, should be the dupe, or tool, or even present friend of such a creature as this perjured Peer, it gives me a pang.'

'Mr. Cleveland,' said Vivian, 'I am grateful for your kindness; and although we may probably part, in a few hours, never to meet again, I will speak to you with the frankness which you have merited, and to which I feel you are entitled. I am not the dupe of the Marquess of Carabas; I am not, I trust, the dupe, or tool, of any one whatever. Believe me, sir, there is that at work in England which, taken at the tide, may lead on to fortune. I see this, sir; I, a young man, uncommitted in political principles, unconnected in public life, feeling some confidence, I confess, in my own abilities, but desirous of availing myself, at the same time, of the powers of others. Thus situated, I find myself working for the same end as my Lord Carabas and twenty other men of similar calibre, mental and moral; and, sir, am I to play the hermit in the drama of life because, per-

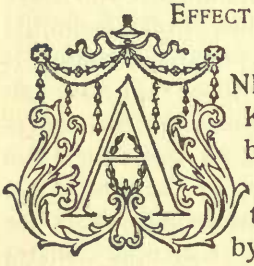
chance, my fellow-actors may be sometimes fools, and occasionally knaves? If the Marquess of Carabas has done you the ill-service which Fame says he has, your sweetest revenge will be to make him your tool; your most perfect triumph, to rise to power by his influence.

'I confess that I am desirous of finding in you the companion of my career. Your splendid talents have long commanded my admiration; and, as you have given me credit for something like good feeling, I will say that my wish to find in you a colleague is greatly increased when I see that those splendid talents are even the least estimable points in Mr. Cleveland's character. But, sir, perhaps all this time I am in error; perhaps Mr. Cleveland is, as the world reports him, no longer the ambitious being who once commanded the admiration of a listening Senate; perhaps, convinced of the vanity of human wishes, Mr. Cleveland would rather devote his attention to the furtherance of the interests of his immediate circle; and, having schooled his intellect in the Universities of two nations, is probably content to pass the hours of his life in mediating in the quarrels of a country village.'

Vivian ceased. Cleveland heard him with his head resting on both his arms. He started at the last expression, and something like a blush suffused his cheek, but he did not reply. At last he jumped up and rang the bell. 'Come, Mr. Grey,' said he, 'I am in no humour for politics this morning. You must not, at any rate, visit Wales for nothing. Morris! send down to the village for this gentleman's luggage. Even we cottagers have a bed for a friend, Mr. Grey: come, and I will introduce you to my wife.'

CHAPTER II.

Effect of a Silver Tongue.



ND Vivian was now an inmate of Kenrich Lodge. It would have been difficult to have conceived a life of more pure happiness than that which was apparently enjoyed by its gifted master. A beautiful wife and lovely children, and a romantic situation, and an income sufficient not only for their own but for the wants of their necessitous neighbours; what more could man wish? Answer me, thou inexplicable myriad of sensations which the world calls human nature!

Three days passed over in delightful converse. It was so long since Cleveland had seen any one fresh from the former scenes of his life, that the company of any one would have been agreeable; but here was a companion who knew everyone, everything, full of wit and anecdote, and literature and fashion; and then so engaging in his manners, and with such a winning voice.

The heart of Cleveland relented; his stern manner gave way; all his former warm and generous feeling gained the ascendant; he was in turn amusing, com-

municative, and engaging. Finding that he could please another, he began to be pleased himself. The nature of the business upon which Vivian was his guest rendered confidence necessary; confidence begets kindness. In a few days Vivian necessarily became more acquainted with Mr. Cleveland's disposition and situation than if they had been acquainted for as many years; in short,

> They talked with open heart and tongue,
> Affectionate and true,
> A pair of friends.

Vivian, for some time, dwelt upon everything but the immediate subject of his mission; but when, after the experience of a few days, their hearts were open to each other, and they had mutually begun to discover that there was a most astonishing similarity in their principles, their tastes, their feelings, then the magician poured forth his incantation, and raised the once-laid ghost of Cleveland's ambition. The recluse agreed to take the lead of the Carabas party. He was to leave Wales immediately, and resign his place; in return for which the nephew of Lord Courtown was immediately to give up, in his favour, an office of considerable emolument; and, having thus provided some certainty for his family, Frederick Cleveland prepared himself to combat for a more important office.

CHAPTER III.

A Surprising Tableau.

'IS MR. CLEVELAND handsome?' asked Mrs. Felix Lorraine of Vivian, immediately on his return, 'and what colour are his eyes?'

'Upon my honour, I have not the least recollection of ever looking at them; but I believe he is not blind.'

'How foolish you are! now tell me, pray, *point de moquerie*, is he amusing?'

'What does Mrs. Felix Lorraine mean by amusing?' asked Vivian.

'Oh! you always tease me with your definitions; go away. I will quarrel with you.'

'By-the-bye, Mrs. Felix Lorraine, how is Colonel Delmington?'

Vivian redeemed his pledge: Mr. Cleveland arrived. It was the wish of the Marquess, if possible, not to meet his old friend till dinner-time. He thought that, surrounded by his guests, certain awkward senatorial reminiscences might be got over. But, unfortunately, Mr. Cleveland arrived about an hour before dinner, and, as it was a cold autumnal day, most of the visitors who were staying at Château Desir were assembled in the drawing-room. The Marquess

sallied forward to receive his guest with a most dignified countenance and a most aristocratic step; but, before he got half-way, his coronation pace degenerated into a strut, and then into a shamble, and with an awkward and confused countenance, half impudent and half flinching, he held forward his left hand to his newly-arrived visitor. Mr. Cleveland looked terrifically courteous and amiably arrogant. He greeted the Marquess with a smile at once gracious and grim, and looked something like Goliath, as you see the Philistine depicted in some old German painting, looking down upon the pigmy fighting men of Israel.

As is generally the custom when there is a great deal to be arranged and many points to be settled, days flew over, and very little of the future system of the party was matured. Vivian made one or two ineffectual struggles to bring the Marquess to a business-like habit of mind, but his Lordship never dared to trust himself alone with Cleveland, and, indeed, almost lost the power of speech when in presence of the future leader of his party; so, in the morning, the Marquess played off the two Lords and Sir Berdmore against his former friend, and then, to compensate for not meeting Mr. Cleveland in the morning, he was particularly courteous to him at dinner-time, and asked him always how he liked his ride, and invariably took wine with him. As for the rest of the day, he had particularly requested his faithful counsellor, Mrs. Felix Lorraine, 'for God's sake to take this man off my shoulders;' and so that lady, with her usual kindness, and merely to oblige his Lordship, was good enough to patronise Mr. Cleveland, and on the fourth day was taking a moonlit walk with him.

Mr. Cleveland had now been ten days at Château Desir, and was to take his departure the next morning for Wales, in order to arrange everything for his immediate settlement in the metropolis. Every point of importance was postponed until their meeting in London. Mr. Cleveland only agreed to take the lead of the party in the Commons, and received the personal pledge of Lord Courtown as to the promised office.

It was a September day, and to escape from the excessive heat of the sun, and at the same time to enjoy the freshness of the air, Vivian was writing his letters in the conservatory, which opened into one of the drawing-rooms. The numerous party which then honoured the Château with their presence were out, as he conceived, on a pic-nic excursion to the Elfin's Well, a beautiful spot about ten miles off; and among the adventurers were, as he imagined, Mrs. Felix Lorraine and Mr. Cleveland.

Vivian was rather surprised at hearing voices in the adjoining room, and he was still more so when, on looking round, he found that the sounds proceeded from the very two individuals whom he thought were far away. Some tall American plants concealed him from their view, but he observed all that passed distinctly, and a singular scene it was. Mrs. Felix Lorraine was on her knees at the feet of Mr. Cleveland; her countenance indicated the most contrary passions, contending, as it were, for mastery; supplication, anger, and, shall I call it, love? Her companion's countenance was hid, but it was evident that it was not wreathed with smiles: there were a few hurried sentences uttered, and then both quitted the room at different doors, the lady in despair, and the gentleman in disgust.

CHAPTER IV.

A Startling Discovery.

AND now Château Desir was almost deserted. Mrs. Million continued her progress northward. The Courtowns, and the Beaconsfields, and the Scropes quitted immediately after Mr. Cleveland; and when the families that form the material of the visiting corps retire, the nameless nothings that are always lounging about the country mansions of the great, such as artists, tourists, authors, and other live stock, soon disappear. Mr. Vivian Grey agreed to stay another fortnight, at the particular request of the Marquess.

Very few days had passed ere Vivian was exceedingly struck at the decided change which suddenly took place in his Lordship's general demeanour towards him.

The Marquess grew reserved and uncommunicative, scarcely mentioning 'the great business' which had previously been the sole subject of his conversation but to find fault with some arrangement, and exhibiting, whenever his name was mentioned, a marked acrimony against Mr. Cleveland. This rapid change alarmed as much as it astonished Vivian, and he mentioned his feelings and observations to Mrs.

Felix Lorraine. That lady agreed with him that something certainly was wrong; but could not, unfortunately, afford him any clue to the mystery. She expressed the liveliest solicitude that any misunderstanding should be put an end to, and offered her services for that purpose.

In spite, however, of her well-expressed anxiety, Vivian had his own ideas on the subject; and, determined to unravel the affair, he had recourse to the Marchioness.

'I hope your Ladyship is well to-day. I had a letter from Count Caumont this morning. He tells me that he has got the prettiest poodle from Paris that you can possibly conceive! waltzes like an angel, and acts proverbs on its hind feet.'

Her Ladyship's eyes glistened with admiration.

'I have told Caumont to send it me down immediately, and I shall then have the pleasure of presenting it to your Ladyship.'

Her Ladyship's eyes sparkled with delight.

'I think,' continued Vivian, 'I shall take a ride to-day. By-the-bye, how is the Marquess? he seems in low spirits lately.'

'Oh, Mr. Grey! I do not know what you have done to him,' said her Ladyship, settling at least a dozen bracelets; 'but — but ——'

'But what?'

'He thinks — he thinks —'

'Thinks what, dear lady?'

'That you have entered into a combination, Mr. Grey.'

'Entered into a combination!'

'Yes, Mr. Grey! a conspiracy, a conspiracy against the Marquess, with Mr. Cleveland. He thinks that

you have made him serve your purpose, and now you are going to get rid of him.'

'Well, that is excellent; and what else does he think?'

'He thinks you talk too loud,' said the Marchioness, still working at her bracelets.

'Well! that is shockingly vulgar! Allow me to recommend your Ladyship to alter the order of those bracelets, and place the blue and silver against the maroon. You may depend upon it, that is the true Vienna order. And what else does the Marquess say?'

'He thinks you are generally too authoritative. Not that I think so, Mr. Grey: I am sure your conduct to me has been most courteous. The blue and silver next to the maroon, did you say? Yes; certainly it does look better. I have no doubt the Marquess is quite wrong, and I dare say you will set things right immediately. You will remember the pretty poodle, Mr. Grey? and you will not tell the Marquess I mentioned anything.'

'Oh! certainly not. I will give orders for them to book an inside place for the poodle, and send him down by the coach immediately. I must be off now. Remember the blue and silver next to the maroon. Good morning to your Ladyship.'

'Mrs. Felix Lorraine, I am your most obedient slave,' said Vivian Grey, as he met that lady on the landing-place. 'I can see no reason why I should not drive you this bright day to the Elfin's Well; we have long had an engagement to go there.'

The lady smiled a gracious assent; the pony phaeton was immediately ordered.

'How pleasant Lady Courtown and I used to discourse about martingales! I think I invented one,

did not I? Pray, Mrs. Felix Lorraine, can you tell me what a martingale is? for upon my honour I have forgotten, or never knew.'

'If you found a martingale for the mother, Vivian, it had been well if you had found a curb for the daughter. Poor Cynthia! I had intended once to advise the Marchioness to interfere; but one forgets these things.'

'One does. O, Mrs. Felix!' exclaimed Vivian, 'I told your admirable story of the Leyden Professor to Mrs. Cleveland. It is universally agreed to be the best ghost-story extant. I think you said you knew the Professor.'

'Well! I have seen him often, and heard the story from his own lips. And, as I mentioned before, far from being superstitious, he was an *esprit fort.* Do you know, Mr. Grey, I have such an interesting packet from Germany to-day; from my cousin, Baron Rodenstein. But I must keep all the stories for the evening; come to my boudoir, and I will read them to you. There is one tale which I am sure will make a convert even of you. It happened to Rodenstein himself, and within these three months,' added the lady in a serious tone. 'The Rodensteins are a singular family. My mother was a Rodenstein. Do you think this beautiful?' said Mrs. Felix, showing Vivian a small miniature which was attached to a chain round her neck. It was the portrait of a youth habited in the costume of a German student. His rich brown hair was flowing over his shoulders, and his dark blue eyes beamed with such a look of mysterious inspiration, that they might have befitted a young prophet.

'Very, very beautiful!'

'''Tis Max, Max Rodenstein,' said the lady, with a faltering voice. 'He was killed at Leipsic, at the head of a band of his friends and fellow-students. O, Mr. Grey! this is a fair work of art, but if you had but seen the prototype you would have gazed on this as on a dim and washed-out drawing. There was one portrait indeed, which did him more justice; but then that portrait was not the production of mortal pencil.'

Vivian looked at his companion with a somewhat astonished air, but Mrs. Felix Lorraine's countenance was as little indicative of jesting as that of the young student whose miniature rested on her bosom.

'Did you say *not* the production of a mortal hand, Mrs. Felix Lorraine?'

'I am afraid I shall weary you with my stories, but the one I am about to tell is so well evidenced that I think even Mr. Vivian Grey will hear it without a sneer.'

'A sneer! O lady-love, do I ever sneer?'

'Max Rodenstein was the glory of his house. A being so beautiful in body and in soul you cannot imagine, and I will not attempt to describe. This miniature has given you some faint idea of his image, and yet this is only the copy of a copy. The only wish of the Baroness Rodenstein, which never could be accomplished, was the possession of a portrait of her youngest son, for no consideration could induce Max to allow his likeness to be taken. His old nurse had always told him that the moment his portrait was taken he would die. The condition upon which such a beautiful being was allowed to remain in the world was, she always said, that his beauty should not be imitated. About three months before

the battle of Leipsic, when Max was absent at the University, which was nearly four hundred miles from Rodenstein Castle, there arrived one morning a large case directed to the Baroness. On opening it it was found to contain a picture, the portrait of her son. The colouring was so vivid, the general execution so miraculous, that for some moments they forgot to wonder at the incident in their admiration of the work of art. In one corner of the picture, in small characters yet fresh, was an inscription, which on examining they found consisted of these words: "Painted last night. Now, lady, thou hast thy wish." My aunt sank into the Baron's arms.

'In silence and in trembling the wonderful portrait was suspended over the fire-place of my aunt's favourite apartment. The next day they received letters from Max. He was quite well, but mentioned nothing of the mysterious painting.

'Three months afterwards, as a lady was sitting alone in the Baroness's room, and gazing on the portrait of him she loved right dearly, she suddenly started from her seat, and would have shrieked, had not an indefinable sensation prevented her. The eyes of the portrait moved. The lady stood leaning on a chair, pale, and trembling like an aspen, but gazing steadfastly on the animated portrait. It was no illusion of a heated fancy; again the eyelids trembled, there was a melancholy smile, and then they closed. The clock of Rodenstein Castle struck three. Between astonishment and fear the lady was tearless. Three days afterwards came the news of the battle of Leipsic, and at the very moment that the eyes of the portrait closed Max Rodenstein had been pierced by a Polish Lancer.'

'And who was this wonderful lady, the witness of this wonderful incident?' asked Vivian.

'That lady was myself.'

There was something so singular in the tone of Mrs. Felix Lorraine's voice, and so peculiar in the expression of her countenance, as she uttered these words, that the jest died on Vivian's tongue; and, for want of something better to do, he lashed the little ponies, which were already scampering at their full speed.

The road to the Elfin's Well ran through the wildest parts of the park; and after an hour and a half's drive they reached the fairy spot. It was a beautiful and a pellucid spring, that bubbled up in a small wild dell, which, nurtured by the flowing stream, was singularly fresh and green. Above the spring had been erected a Gothic arch of grey stone, round which grew a few fine birch-trees. In short, nature had intended the spot for pic-nics. There was fine water, and an interesting tradition; and as the parties always bring, or always should bring, a trained punster, champagne, and cold pasties, what more ought nature to have provided?

'Come, Mrs. Lorraine, I will tie Gypsey to this ash, and then you and I will rest ourselves beneath these birch-trees, just where the fairies dance.'

'Oh, delightful!'

'Now, truly, we should have some book of beautiful poetry to while away an hour. You will blame me for not bringing one. Do not. I would sooner listen to your voice; and, indeed, there is a subject on which I wish to ask your particular advice.'

'*Is* there?'

'I have been thinking that this is a somewhat rash

step of the Marquess; this throwing himself into the arms of his former bitterest enemy, Cleveland.'

'You really think so?'

'Why, Mrs. Lorraine, does it appear to you to be the most prudent course of action which could have been conceived?'

'Certainly not.'

'You agree with me, then, that there is, if not cause for regret at this engagement, at least for reflection on its probable consequences?'

'I quite agree with you.'

'I know you do. I have had some conversation with the Marquess upon this subject this very morning.'

'Have you?' eagerly exclaimed the lady, and she looked pale and breathed short.

'Ay; and he tells me you have made some very sensible observations on the subject. 'Tis pity they were not made before Mr. Cleveland left; the mischief might then have been prevented.'

'I certainly have made some observations.'

'And very kind of you. What a blessing for the Marquess to have such a friend!'

'I spoke to him,' said Mrs. Felix, with a more assured tone, 'in much the same spirit as you have been addressing me. It does, indeed, seem a most imprudent act, and I thought it my duty to tell him so.'

'Ay, no doubt; but how came you, lady fair, to imagine that *I* was also a person to be dreaded by his Lordship; *I*, Vivian Grey?'

'Did I say *you?*' asked the lady, pale as death.

'Did you not, Mrs. Felix Lorraine? Have you not, regardless of my interests, in the most unwarrantable and unjustifiable manner; have you not, to gratify some private pique which you entertain against Mr.

Cleveland—have you not, I ask you, poisoned the Marquess's mind against one who never did aught to you but what was kind and honourable?'

'I have been imprudent; I confess it; I have spoken somewhat loosely.'

'Now, listen to me once more,' and Vivian grasped her hand. 'What has passed between you and Mr. Cleveland it is not for me to enquire. I give you my word of honour that he never even mentioned your name to me. I can scarcely understand how any man could have incurred the deadly hatred which you appear to entertain for him. I repeat, I can contemplate no situation in which you could be placed together which would justify such behaviour. It could not be justified, even if he had spurned you while ——kneeling at his feet.'

Mrs. Felix Lorraine shrieked and fainted. A sprinkling from the fairy stream soon recovered her. 'Spare me! spare me!' she faintly cried: 'say nothing of what you have seen.'

'Mrs. Lorraine, I have no wish. I have spoken thus explicitly that we may not again misunderstand each other. I have spoken thus explicitly, I say, that I may not be under the necessity of speaking again, for if I speak again it must not be to Mrs. Felix Lorraine. There is my hand; and now let the Elfin's Well be blotted out of our memories.'

Vivian drove rapidly home, and endeavoured to talk in his usual tone and with his usual spirit; but his companion could not be excited. Once, ay, twice, she pressed his hand, and as he assisted her from the phaeton she murmured something like a blessing. She ran upstairs immediately. Vivian had to give some directions about the ponies; Gypsey was ill, or

Fanny had a cold, or something of the kind; and so he was detained for about a quarter of an hour before the house, speaking most learnedly to grooms, and consulting on cases with a skilled gravity worthy of Professor Coleman.

When he entered the house he found the luncheon prepared, and Mrs. Felix pressed him earnestly to take some refreshment. He was indeed wearied, and agreed to take a glass of hock and seltzer.

'Let me mix it for you,' said Mrs. Felix; 'do you like sugar?'

Tired with his drive, Vivian Grey was leaning on the mantelpiece, with his eyes vacantly gazing on the looking-glass which rested on the marble slab. It was by pure accident that, reflected in the mirror, he distinctly beheld Mrs. Felix Lorraine open a small silver box, and throw some powder into the tumbler which she was preparing for him. She was leaning down, with her back almost turned to the glass, but still Vivian saw it distinctly. A sickness came over him, and ere he could recover himself his Hebe tapped him on the shoulder.

'Here, drink, drink while it is effervescent.'

'I cannot drink,' said Vivian, 'I am not thirsty; I am too hot; I am anything ——'

'How foolish you are! It will be quite spoiled.'

'No, no; the dog shall have it. Here, Fidèle, you look thirsty enough; come here ——'

'Mr. Grey, I do not mix tumblers for dogs,' said the lady, rather agitated: 'if you will not take it,' and she held it once more before him, 'here it goes for ever.' So saying she emptied the tumbler into a large globe of glass, in which some gold and silver fish were swimming their endless rounds.

CHAPTER V.

Ensnaring a Siren.

THIS last specimen of Mrs. Felix Lorraine was somewhat too much even for the steeled nerves of Vivian Grey, and he sought his chamber for relief.

'Is it possible? Can I believe my senses? Or has some demon, as we read of in old tales, mocked me in a magic mirror? I can believe anything. Oh! my heart is very sick! I once imagined that I was using this woman for my purpose. Is it possible that aught of good can come to one who is forced to make use of such evil instruments as these? A horrible thought sometimes comes over my spirit. I fancy that in this mysterious foreigner, that in this woman, I have met a kind of double of myself. The same wonderful knowledge of the human mind, the same sweetness of voice, the same miraculous management which has brought us both under the same roof: yet do I find her the most abandoned of all beings; a creature guilty of that which, even in this guilty age, I thought was obsolete. And is it possible that I am like her? that I can resemble her? that even the indefinite shadow of my most unhal-

lowed thought can for a moment be as vile as her righteousness? O God! the system of my existence seems to stop. I cannot breathe.' He flung himself upon his bed, and felt for a moment as if he had quaffed the poisoned draught so lately offered.

'It is not so; it cannot be so; it shall not be so! In seeking the Marquess I was unquestionably impelled by a mere feeling of self-interest; but I have advised him to no course of action in which his welfare is not equally consulted with my own. Indeed, if not principle, interest would make me act faithfully towards him, for my fortunes are bound up in his. But am I entitled, I, who can lose nothing, am I entitled to play with other men's fortunes? Am I all this time deceiving myself with some wretched sophistry? Am I, then, an intellectual Don Juan, reckless of human minds, as he was of human bodies; a spiritual libertine? But why this wild declamation? Whatever I have done, it is too late to recede; even this very moment delay is destruction, for now it is not a question as to the ultimate prosperity of our worldly prospects, but the immediate safety of our very bodies. Poison! O God! O God! Away with all fear, all repentance, all thought of past, all reckoning of future. If I be the Juan that I fancied myself, then Heaven be praised! I have a confidant in all my trouble; the most faithful of counsellors, the craftiest of valets; a Leporello often tried and never found wanting: my own good mind. And now, thou female fiend! the battle is to the strongest; and I see right well that the struggle between two such spirits will be a long and a fearful one. Woe, I say, to the vanquished! You must be dealt with by arts which even yourself cannot conceive. Your boasted knowl-

edge of human nature shall not again stand you in stead; for, mark me, from henceforward Vivian Grey's conduct towards you shall have no precedent in human nature.'

As Vivian re-entered the drawing-room he met a servant carrying in the globe of gold and silver fish.

'What, still in your pelisse, Mrs. Lorraine!' said Vivian. 'Nay, I hardly wonder at it, for surely, a prettier pelisse never yet fitted prettier form. You have certainly a most admirable taste in dress; and this the more surprises me, for it is generally your plain personage that is the most recherché in frills and fans and flounces.'

The lady smiled.

'Oh! by-the-bye,' continued her companion, 'I have a letter from Cleveland this morning. I wonder how any misunderstanding could possibly have existed between you, for he speaks of you in such terms.'

'What does he say?' was the quick question.

'Oh! what does he say?' drawled out Vivian; and he yawned, and was most provokingly uncommunicative.

'Come, come, Mr. Grey, do tell me.'

'Oh! tell you, certainly. Come, let us walk together in the conservatory:' so saying, he took the lady by the hand, and they left the room.

'And now for the letter, Mr. Grey.'

'Ay, now for the letter;' and Vivian slowly drew an epistle from his pocket, and therefrom read some exceedingly sweet passages, which made Mrs. Felix Lorraine's very heart-blood tingle. Considering that Vivian Grey had never in his life received a single letter from Mr. Cleveland, this was tolerably well: but he was always an admirable improvisatore! 'I am

sure that when Cleveland comes to town everything will be explained; I am sure, at least, that it will not be my fault if you are not the best friends. I am heroic in saying all this, Mrs. Lorraine; there was a time when (and here Vivian seemed so agitated that he could scarcely proceed), there was a time when I could have called that man liar who would have prophesied that Vivian Grey could have assisted another in riveting the affections of Mrs. Felix Lorraine. But enough of this. I am a weak, inexperienced boy, and misinterpret, perhaps, that which is merely the compassionate kindness natural to all women into a feeling of a higher nature. But I must learn to contain myself; I really do feel quite ashamed of my behaviour about the tumbler to-day. To act with such unwarrantable unkindness, merely because I had remembered that you once performed the same kind office for Colonel Delmington, was indeed too bad.'

'Colonel Delmington is a vain, empty-headed fool. Do not think of him, my dear Mr. Grey,' said Mrs. Felix, with a countenance beaming with smiles.

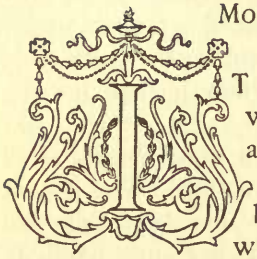
'Well, I will not; and I will try to behave like a man; like a man of the world, I should say. But indeed you must excuse the warm feelings of a youth; and truly, when I call to mind the first days of our acquaintance, and then remember that our moonlit walks are gone for ever, and that our ——'

'Nay, do not believe so, my dear Vivian; believe me, as I ever shall be, your friend, your ——'

'I will, I will, my dear, my own Amalia!'

CHAPTER VI.

Moonlight Madness.



T WAS an autumnal night; the wind was capricious and changeable as a petted beauty, or an Italian grey-hound, or a shot silk. Now the breeze blew so fresh that the white clouds dashed along the sky as if they bore a band of witches too late for their Sabbath meeting, or some other mischief; and now, lulled and soft as the breath of a slumbering infant, you might almost have fancied it Midsummer Eve; and the bright moon, with her starry court, reigned undisturbed in the light blue sky. Vivian Grey was leaning against an old beech-tree in the most secluded part of the park, and was gazing on the moon.

O thou bright moon! thou object of my first love! thou shalt not escape an invocation, although perchance at this very moment some varlet sonnetteer is prating of 'the boy Endymion' and 'thy silver bow.' Here to thee, Queen of the Night! in whatever name thou most delightest! Or Bendis, as they hailed thee in rugged Thrace; or Bubastis, as they howled to thee in mysterious Egypt; or Dian, as they sacrificed to thee in gorgeous Rome; or Artemis, as they sighed

to thee on the bright plains of ever glorious Greece! Why is it that all men gaze on thee? Why is it that all men love thee? Why is it that all men worship thee?

Shine on, shine on, sultana of the soul! the Passions are thy eunuch slaves, Ambition gazes on thee, and his burning brow is cooled, and his fitful pulse is calm. Grief wanders in her moonlit walk and sheds no tear; and when thy crescent smiles the lustre of Joy's revelling eye is dusked. Quick Anger, in thy light, forgets revenge; and even dove-eyed Hope feeds on no future joys when gazing on the miracle of thy beauty.

Shine on, shine on! although a pure Virgin, thou art the mighty mother of all abstraction! The eye of the weary peasant returning from his daily toil, and the rapt gaze of the inspired poet, are alike fixed on thee; thou stillest the roar of marching armies, and who can doubt thy influence o'er the waves who has witnessed the wide Atlantic sleeping under thy silver beam?

Shine on, shine on! they say thou art Earth's satellite; yet when I gaze on thee my thoughts are not of thy suzerain. They teach us that thy power is a fable, and that thy divinity is a dream. Oh, thou bright Queen! I will be no traitor to thy sweet authority; and verily, I will not believe that thy influence o'er our hearts is, at this moment, less potent than when we worshipped in thy glittering fane of Ephesus, or trembled at the dark horrors of thine Arician rites. Then, hail to thee, Queen of the Night! Hail to thee, Diana, Triformis; Cynthia, Orthia, Taurica; ever mighty, ever lovely, ever holy! Hail! hail! hail!

Were I a metaphysician, I would tell you why Vivian Grey had been gazing two hours on the moon; for I could then present you with a most logical programme of the march of his ideas, since he whispered his last honied speech in the ear of Mrs. Felix Lorraine, at dinner-time, until this very moment, when he did not even remember that such a being as Mrs. Felix Lorraine breathed. Glory to the metaphysician's all-perfect theory! When they can tell me why, at a bright banquet, the thought of death has flashed across my mind, who fear not death; when they can tell me why, at the burial of my beloved friend, when my very heart-strings seem bursting, my sorrow has been mocked by the involuntary remembrance of ludicrous adventures and grotesque tales; when they can tell me why, in a dark mountain pass, I have thought of an absent woman's eyes; or why, when in the very act of squeezing the third lime into a beaker of Burgundy cup, my memory hath been of lean apothecaries and their vile drugs; why then, I say again, glory to the metaphysician's all-perfect theory! and fare you well, sweet world, and you, my merry masters, whom, perhaps, I have studied somewhat too cunningly: *nosce te ipsum* shall be my motto. I will doff my travelling cap, and on with the monk's cowl.

There are mysterious moments in some men's lives when the faces of human beings are very agony to them, and when the sound of the human voice is jarring as discordant music. These fits are not the consequence of violent or contending passions: they grow not out of sorrow, or joy, or hope, or fear, or hatred, or despair. For in the hour of affliction the tones of our fellow-creatures are ravishing as the most delicate lute; and in the flush moment of joy, where

is the smiler who loves not a witness to his revelry or a listener to his good fortune? Fear makes us feel our humanity, and then we fly to men, and Hope is the parent of kindness. The misanthrope and the reckless are neither agitated nor agonised. It is in these moments that men find in Nature that congeniality of spirit which they seek for in vain in their own species. It is in these moments that we sit by the side of a waterfall and listen to its music the livelong day. It is in these moments that we gaze upon the moon. It is in these moments that Nature becomes our Egeria; and, refreshed and renovated by this beautiful communion, we return to the world better enabled to fight our parts in the hot war of passions, to perform the great duties for which man appeared to have been created, to love, to hate, to slander, and to slay.

It was past midnight, and Vivian was at a considerable distance from the Château. He purposed entering by a side-door, which led into the billiard-room, and from thence, crossing the Long Gallery, he could easily reach his apartment without disturbing any of the household. His way led through the little gate at which he had parted with Mrs. Felix Lorraine on the first day of their meeting.

As he softly opened the door which led into the Long Gallery he found he was not alone: leaning against one of the casements was a female. Her profile was to Vivian as he entered, and the moon, which shone bright through the window, lit up a countenance which he might be excused for not immediately recognising as that of Mrs. Felix Lorraine. She was gazing steadfastly, but her eye did not seem fixed upon any particular object. Her features ap-

AFTER AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY HERMAN ROUNTREE.

As he softly opened the door which led into the long Gallery, he found he was not alone.

(See page 170)

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peared convulsed, but their contortions were not momentary, and, pale as death, a hideous grin seemed chiselled on her idiot countenance.

Vivian scarcely knew whether to stay or to retire. Desirous not to disturb her, he determined not even to breathe; and, as is generally the case, his very exertions to be silent made him nervous, and to save himself from being stifled he coughed.

Mrs. Lorraine immediately started and stared wildly around her, and when her eye caught Vivian's there was a sound in her throat something like the death-rattle.

'Who are you?' she eagerly asked.

'A friend, and Vivian Grey.'

'How came you here?' and she rushed forward and wildly seized his hand, and then she muttered to herself, ''tis flesh.'

'I have been playing, I fear, the mooncalf to-night; and find that, though I am a late watcher, I am not a solitary one.'

Mrs. Lorraine stared earnestly at him, and then she endeavoured to assume her usual expression of countenance; but the effort was too much for her. She dropped Vivian's arm, and buried her face in her own hands. Vivian was retiring, when she again looked up. 'Where are you going?' she asked, with a quick voice.

'To sleep, as I would advise all: 'tis much past midnight.'

'You say not the truth. The brightness of your eye belies the sentence of your tongue. You are not for sleep.'

'Pardon me, dear Mrs. Lorraine; I really have been yawning for the last hour,' said Vivian, and he moved on.

'You are speaking to one who takes her answer from the eye, which does not deceive, and from the speaking lineaments of the face, which are Truth's witnesses. Keep your voice for those who can credit man's words. You will go, then? What! are you afraid of a woman, because "'tis past midnight," and you are in an old gallery?'

'Fear, Mrs. Lorraine, is not a word in my vocabulary.'

'The words in your vocabulary are few, boy! as are the years of your age. He who sent you here this night sent you here not to slumber. Come hither!' and she led Vivian to the window: 'what see you?'

'I see Nature at rest, Mrs. Lorraine; and I would fain follow the example of beasts, birds, and fishes.'

'Yet gaze upon this scene one second. See the distant hills, how beautifully their rich covering is tinted with the moonbeam! These nearer fir-trees, how radiantly their black skeleton forms are tipped with silver; and the old and thickly-foliaged oaks bathed in light! and the purple lake reflecting in its lustrous bosom another heaven! Is it not a fair scene?'

'Beautiful! most beautiful!'

'Yet, Vivian, where is the being for whom all this beauty exists? Where is your mighty creature, Man? The peasant on his rough couch enjoys, perchance, slavery's only service-money, sweet sleep; or, waking in the night, curses at the same time his lot and his lord. And that lord is restless on some downy couch; his night thoughts, not of this sheeny lake and this bright moon, but of some miserable creation of man's artifice, some mighty nothing, which Nature knows not of, some offspring of her bastard

child, Society. Why, then, is Nature loveliest when man looks not on her? For whom, then, Vivian Grey, is this scene so fair?'

'For poets, lady; for philosophers; for all those superior spirits who require some relaxation from the world's toils; spirits who only commingle with humanity on the condition that they may sometimes commune with Nature.'

'Superior spirits! say you?' and here they paced the gallery. 'When Valerian, first Lord Carabas, raised this fair castle; when, profuse for his posterity, all the genius of Italian art and Italian artists was lavished on this English palace; when the stuffs and statues, the marbles and the mirrors, the tapestry, and the carvings, and the paintings of Genoa, and Florence, and Venice, and Padua, and Vicenza, were obtained by him at miraculous cost, and with still more miraculous toil; what think you would have been his sensations if, while his soul was revelling in the futurity of his descendants keeping their state in this splendid pile, some wizard had foretold to him that, ere three centuries could elapse, the fortunes of his mighty family would be the sport of two individuals; one of them a foreigner, unconnected in blood, or connected only in hatred; and the other a young adventurer alike unconnected with his race, in blood or in love; a being ruling all things by the power of his own genius, and reckless of all consequences save his own prosperity? If the future had been revealed to my great ancestor, the Lord Valerian, think you, Vivian Grey, that you and I should be walking in this Long Gallery?'

'Really, Mrs. Lorraine, I have been so interested in discovering what people think in the nineteenth

century, that I have had but little time to speculate on the possible opinions of an old gentleman who flourished in the sixteenth.'

'You may sneer, sir; but I ask you, if there are spirits so superior to that of the slumbering Lord of this castle as those of Vivian Grey and Amalia Lorraine, why may there not be spirits proportionately superior to our own?'

'If you are keeping me from my bed, Mrs. Lorraine, merely to lecture my conceit by proving that there are in this world wiser heads than that of Vivian Grey, on my honour you are giving yourself a great deal of unnecessary trouble.'

'You will misunderstand me, then, you wilful boy!'

'Nay, lady, I will not affect to misunderstand your meaning; but I recognise, you know full well, no intermediate essence between my own good soul and that ineffable and omnipotent spirit in whose existence philosophers and priests alike agree.'

'Omnipotent and ineffable essence! Leave such words to scholars and to school-boys! And think you that such indefinite nothings, such unmeaning abstractions, can influence beings whose veins are full of blood, bubbling like this?' And here she grasped Vivian with a feverish hand. 'Omnipotent and ineffable essence! Oh! I have lived in a land where every mountain, and every stream, and every wood, and every ruin, has its legend and its peculiar spirit; a land in whose dark forests the midnight hunter, with his spirit-shout, scares the slumbers of the trembling serf; a land from whose winding rivers the fair-haired Undine welcomes the belated traveller to her fond and fatal embrace; and you talk to me of omnipotent and ineffable essences! Miserable mocker!

It is not true, Vivian Grey; you are but echoing the world's deceit, and even at this hour of the night you dare not speak as you do think. You worship no omnipotent and ineffable essence; you believe in no omnipotent and ineffable essence. Shrined in the secret chamber of your soul there is an image before which you bow down in adoration, and that image is YOURSELF. And truly, when I do gaze upon your radiant eyes,' and here the lady's tone became more terrestrial; 'and truly, when I do look upon your luxuriant curls,' and here the lady's small white hand played like lightning through Vivian's dark hair; 'and truly, when I do remember the beauty of your all-perfect form, I cannot deem your self-worship a false idolatry,' and here the lady's arms were locked round Vivian's neck, and her head rested on his bosom.

'Oh, Amalia! it would be far better for you to rest here than to think of that of which the knowledge is vanity.'

'Vanity!' shrieked Mrs. Lorraine, and she violently loosened her embrace, and extricated herself from the arm which, rather in courtesy than in kindness, had been wound round her delicate waist: 'Vanity! Oh! if you knew but what I know; oh! if you had but seen what I have seen;' and here her voice failed her, and she stood motionless in the moonshine, with averted head and outstretched arms.

'Amalia! this is madness; for Heaven's sake calm yourself!'

'Calm myself! Yes, it is madness; very, very madness! 'tis the madness of the fascinated bird; 'tis the madness of the murderer who is voluntarily broken on the wheel; 'tis the madness of the fawn that gazes with adoration on the lurid glare of the

anaconda's eye; 'tis the madness of woman who flies to the arms of her Fate!' And here she sprang like a tigress round Vivian's neck, her long light hair bursting from its bands, and clustering down her shoulders.

And here was Vivian Grey, at past midnight, in this old gallery, with this wild woman clinging round his neck. The figures in the ancient tapestry looked living in the moon, and immediately opposite him was one compartment of some old mythological tale, in which were represented, grinning, in grim majesty, the Fates.

The wind now rose again, and the clouds which had vanished, began to re-assemble in the heavens. As the blue sky was gradually covering, the gigantic figures of Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos became as gradually dimmer and dimmer, and the grasp of Vivian's fearful burden looser and looser. At last the moon was entirely hid, the figures of the Fates vanished, and Mrs. Felix Lorraine sank lifeless into his arms.

Vivian groped his way with difficulty to the nearest window, the very one at which she was leaning when he first entered the gallery. He played with her wild curls; he whispered to her in a voice sweeter than the sweetest serenade; but she only raised her eyes from his breast and stared wildly at him, and then clung round his neck with, if possible, a tighter grasp.

For nearly half an hour did Vivian stand leaning against the window, with his mystic and motionless companion. At length the wind again fell; there was a break in the sky, and a single star appeared in the midst of the clouds, surrounded with a little heaven of azure.

'See there, see there!' the lady cried, and then she unlocked her arms. 'What would you give, Vivian Grey, to read that star?'

'Am I more interested in that star, Amalia, than in any other of the bright host?' asked Vivian with a serious tone, for he thought it necessary to humour his companion.

'Are you not? is it not the star of your destiny?'

'Are you learned in all the learning of the Chaldeans, too?'

'Oh, no, no, no!' slowly murmured Mrs. Lorraine, and then she started: but Vivian seized her arms, and prevented her from again clasping his neck.

'I must keep these pretty hands close prisoners,' he said, smiling, 'unless you promise to behave with more moderation. Come, my Amalia! you shall be my instructress! Why am I so interested in this brilliant star?' and holding her hands in one of his, he wound his arm round her waist, and whispered her such words as he thought might calm her troubled spirit. The wildness of her eyes gradually gave way; at length she raised them to Vivian with a look of meek tenderness, and her head sank upon his breast.

'It shines, it shines, it shines, Vivian!' she softly whispered; 'glory to thee and woe to me! Nay, you need not hold my hands; I will not harm you. I cannot: 'tis no use. O Vivian! when we first met, how little did I know to whom I pledged myself!'

'Amalia, forget these wild fancies; estrange yourself from the wild belief which has exercised so baneful an influence, not only over your mind, but over the very soul of the land from which you come. Recognise in me only your friend, and leave the

other world to those who value it more, or more deserve it. Does not this fair earth contain sufficient of interest and enjoyment?'

'O Vivian! you speak with a sweet voice, but with a sceptic's spirit. You know not what I know.'

'Tell me, then, my Amalia; let me share your secrets, provided they be your sorrows.'

'Almost within this hour, and in this park, there has happened that which ——' and here her voice died, and she looked fearfully round her.

'Nay, fear not; no one can harm you here, no one shall harm you. Rest upon me, and tell me all thy grief.'

'I dare not, I cannot tell you.'

'Nay, thou shalt.'

'I cannot speak; your eye scares me. Are you mocking me? I cannot speak if you look so at me.'

'I will not look on you; I will gaze on yonder star. Now speak on.'

'O Vivian, there is a custom in my native land: the world calls it an unhallowed one; you, in your proud spirit, will call it a vain one. But you would not deem it vain if you were the woman now resting on your bosom. At certain hours of particular nights, and with peculiar ceremonies, which I need not here mention, we do believe that in a lake or other standing water fate reveals itself to the solitary votary. O Vivian, I have been too long a searcher after this fearful science; and this very night, agitated in spirit, I sought yon water. The wind was in the right direction, and everything concurred in favouring a propitious divination. I knelt down to gaze on the lake. I had always been accustomed to view my own figure performing some future action, or engaged

in some future scene of my life. I gazed, but I saw nothing but a brilliant star. I looked up into the heavens, but the star was not there, and the clouds were driving quick across the sky. More than usually agitated by this singular occurrence, I gazed once more; and just at the moment when with breathless and fearful expectation I waited the revelation of my immediate destiny there flitted a figure across the water. It was there only for the breathing of a second, and as it passed it mocked me.' Here Mrs. Lorraine writhed in Vivian's arms; her features were moulded in the same unnatural expression as when he first entered the gallery, and the hideous grin was again sculptured on her countenance. Her whole frame was in such a state of agitation that she rose up and down in Vivian's arms, and it was only with the exertion of his whole strength that he could retain her.

'Why, Amalia, this, this was nothing; your own figure.'

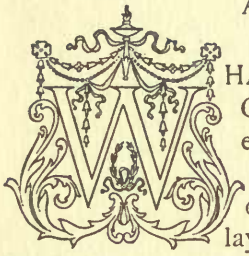
'No, not my own; it was yours!'

Uttering a piercing shriek, which echoed through the winding gallery, she swooned.

Vivian gazed on her in a state of momentary stupefaction, for the extraordinary scene had begun to influence his own nerves. And now he heard the tread of distant feet, and a light shone through the key-hole of the nearest door. The fearful shriek had alarmed some of the household. What was to be done? In desperation Vivian caught the lady up in his arms, and dashing out of an opposite door bore her to her chamber.

CHAPTER VII.

A Curious Bird.



HAT is this chapter to be about? Come, I am inclined to be courteous! You shall choose the subject of it. What shall it be, sentiment or scandal? a love-scene or a lay-sermon? You will not choose? Then we must open the note which Vivian, in the morning, found on his pillow:—

'Did you hear the horrid shriek last night? It must have disturbed every one. I think it must have been one of the South American birds which Captain Tropic gave the Marchioness. Do not they sometimes favour the world with these nocturnal shriekings? Is not there a passage in Spix apropos to this? A——.'

'Did you hear the shriek last night, Mr. Grey?' asked the Marchioness, as Vivian entered the breakfast-room.

'Oh, yes! Mr. Grey, did you hear the shriek?' asked Miss Graves.

'Who did not?'

'What could it be?' said the Marchioness.

'What could it be?' said Miss Graves.

'What should it be; a cat in a gutter, or a sick cow, or a toad dying to be devoured, Miss Graves?'

Always snub toadys and led captains. It is only your greenhorns who endeavour to make their way by fawning and cringing to every member of the establishment. It is a miserable mistake. No one likes his dependants to be treated with respect, for such treatment affords an unpleasant contrast to his own conduct. Besides, it makes the toady's blood unruly. There are three persons, mind you, to be attended to: my lord, or my lady, as the case may be (usually the latter), the pet daughter, and the pet dog. I throw out these hints *en passant*, for my principal objects in writing this work are to amuse myself and to instruct society. In some future book, probably the twentieth or twenty-fifth, when the plot begins to wear threadbare, and we can afford a digression, I may give a chapter on Domestic Tactics.

'My dear Marchioness,' continued Vivian, 'see there; I have kept my promise, there is your bracelet. How is Julie to-day?'

'Poor dear, I hope she is better.'

'Oh! yes, poor Julie! I think she is better.'

'I do not know that, Miss Graves,' said her Ladyship, somewhat tartly, not at all approving of a toady thinking. 'I am afraid that scream last night must have disturbed her. O dear, Mr. Grey, I am afraid she will be ill again.'

Miss Graves looked mournful, and lifted up her eyes and hands to Heaven, but did not dare to speak this time.

'I thought she looked a little heavy about the eyes this morning,' said the Marchioness, apparently very agitated; 'and I have heard from Eglamour this post; he is not well, too; I think everybody is ill

now; he has caught a fever going to see the ruins of Pæstum. I wonder why people go to see ruins!'

'I wonder, indeed,' said Miss Graves; 'I never could see anything in a ruin.'

'O, Mr. Grey!' continued the Marchioness, 'I really am afraid Julie is going to be very ill.'

'Let Miss Graves pull her tail and give her a little mustard seed: she will be better to-morrow.'

'Remember that, Miss Graves.'

'O! y-e-s, my Lady!'

'Mrs. Felix,' said the Marchioness, as that lady entered the room, 'you are late to-day; I always reckon upon you as a supporter of an early breakfast at Desir.'

'I have been half round the park.'

'Did you hear the scream, Mrs. Felix?'

'Do you know what it was, Marchioness?'

'No; do you?'

'See the reward of early rising and a walk before breakfast. It was one of your new American birds, and it has half torn down your aviary.'

'One of the new Americans? O the naughty thing! and has it broken the new fancy wirework?'

Here a little odd-looking, snuffy old man, with a brown scratch wig, who had been very busily employed the whole breakfast-time with a cold game pie, the bones of which Vivian observed him most scientifically pick and polish, laid down his knife and fork, and addressed the Marchioness with an air of great interest.

'Pray, will your Ladyship have the goodness to inform me what bird this is?'

The Marchioness looked astounded at any one presuming to ask her a question; and then she drawled,

'Mr. Grey, you know everything; tell this gentleman what some bird is.'

Now this gentleman was Mr. Mackaw, the most celebrated ornithologist extant, and who had written a treatise on Brazilian parroquets, in three volumes folio. He had arrived late at the Château the preceding night, and, although he had the honour of presenting his letter of introduction to the Marquess, this morning was the first time he had been seen by any one of the party present, who were of course profoundly ignorant of his character.

'Oh! we were talking of some South American bird given to the Marchioness by the famous Captain Tropic; you know him, perhaps; Bolivar's brother-in-law, or aide-de-camp, or something of that kind; and which screams so dreadfully at night that the whole family is disturbed. The Chowchowtow it is called; is not it, Mrs. Lorraine?'

'The Chowchowtow!' said Mr. Mackaw; 'I don't know it by that name.'

'Do not you? I dare say we shall find an account of it in Spix, however,' said Vivian, rising, and taking a volume from the book-case; 'ay! here it is; I will read it to you.'

'"The Chowchowtow is about five feet seven inches in height from the point of the bill to the extremity of the claws. Its plumage is of a dingy, yellowish white; its form is elegant, and in its movements and action a certain pleasing and graceful dignity is observable; but its head is by no means worthy of the rest of its frame; and the expression of its eye is indicative of the cunning and treachery of its character. The habits of this bird are peculiar: occasionally most easily domesticated, it is apparently

sensible of the slightest kindness; but its regard cannot be depended upon, and for the slightest inducement, or with the least irritation, it will fly at its feeder. At other times it seeks perfect solitude, and can only be captured with the utmost skill and perseverance. It generally feeds three times a day, but its appetite is not rapacious; it sleeps little, is usually on the wing at sunrise, and proves that it slumbers but little in the night by its nocturnal and thrilling shrieks."'

'What an extraordinary bird! Is that the bird you meant, Mrs. Felix Lorraine?'

Mr. Mackaw was restless the whole time that Vivian was reading this interesting passage. At last he burst forth with an immense deal of science and a great want of construction, a want which scientific men often experience, always excepting those mealy-mouthed professors who lecture 'at the Royal,' and get patronised by the blues, the Lavoisiers of May Fair!

'Chowchowtow, my Lady! five feet seven inches high! Brazilian bird! When I just remind your Ladyship that the height of the tallest bird to be found in Brazil, and in mentioning this fact, I mention nothing hypothetical, the tallest bird does not stand higher than four feet nine. Chowchowtow! Dr. Spix is a name, accurate traveller, don't remember the passage, most singular bird! Chowchowtow! don't know it by that name. Perhaps your Ladyship is not aware; I think you called that gentleman Mr. Grey; perhaps Mr. Grey is not aware, that I am Mr. Mackaw—I arrived late here last night—whose work in three volumes folio, on Brazilian Parroquets, although I had the honour of see-

ing his Lordship, is, I trust, a sufficient evidence that I am not speaking at random on this subject; and consequently from the lateness of the hour, could not have the honour of being introduced to your Ladyship.'

'Mr. Mackaw!' thought Vivian. 'The deuce you are! Oh! why did not I say a Columbian cassowary, or a Peruvian penguin, or a Chilian condor, or a Guatemalan goose, or a Mexican mastard; anything but Brazilian. Oh! unfortunate Vivian Grey!'

The Marchioness, who was quite overcome with this scientific appeal, raised her large, beautiful, sleepy eyes from a delicious compound of French roll and new milk, which she was working up in a Sèvres saucer for Julie; and then, as usual, looked to Vivian for assistance.

'Mr. Grey, you know everything; tell Mr. Mackaw about a bird.'

'Is there any point on which you differ from Spix in his account of the Chowchowtow, Mr. Mackaw?'

'My dear sir, I don't follow him at all. Dr. Spix is a most excellent man, a most accurate traveller, quite a name; but, to be sure, I've only read his work in our own tongue; and I fear from the passage you have just quoted, five feet seven inches high! in Brazil! it must be an imperfect version. I say, that four feet nine is the greatest height I know. I don't speak without some foundation for my statement. The only bird I know above that height is the Paraguay cassowary, which, to be sure, is sometimes found in Brazil. But the description of your bird, Mr. Grey, does not answer that at all. I ought to know. I do not speak at random. The only living specimen of that extraordinary bird, the Paraguay

cassowary, in this country, is in my possession. It was sent me by Bompland, and was given to him by the Dictator of Paraguay himself. I call it, in compliment, Doctor Francia. I arrived here so late last night, only saw his Lordship, or I would have had it on the lawn this morning.'

'Oh, then, Mr. Mackaw,' said Vivian, 'that was the bird which screamed last night!'

'Oh, yes! oh, yes! Mr. Mackaw,' said Mrs. Felix Lorraine.

'Lady Carabas!' continued Vivian, 'it is found out. It is Mr. Mackaw's particular friend, his family physician, whom he always travels with, that awoke us all last night.'

'Is he a foreigner?' asked the Marchioness, looking up.

'My dear Mr. Grey, impossible! the Doctor never screams.'

'Oh! Mr. Mackaw, Mr. Mackaw!' said Vivian.

'Oh! Mr. Mackaw, Mr. Mackaw!' said Mrs. Felix Lorraine.

'I tell you he never screams,' reiterated the man of science; 'I tell you he can't scream; he's muzzled.'

'Oh, then, it must have been the Chowchowtow.'

'Yes; I think it must have been the Chowchowtow.'

'I should very much like to hear Spix's description again,' said Mr. Mackaw, 'only I fear it is troubling you too much, Mr. Grey.'

'Read it yourself, my dear sir,' said Vivian, putting the book into his hand, which was the third volume of Tremaine.

Mr. Mackaw looked at the volume, and turned it over, and sideways, and upside downwards: the brain

of a man who has written three folios on parroquets is soon puzzled. At first he thought the book was a novel; but then, an essay on predestination, under the title of Memoirs of a Man of Refinement, rather puzzled him; then he mistook it for an Oxford reprint of Pearson on the Creed; and then he stumbled on rather a warm scene in an old Château in the South of France.

Before Mr. Mackaw could gain the power of speech the door opened, and entered, who? Dr. Francia.

Mr. Mackaw's travelling companion possessed the awkward accomplishment of opening doors, and now strutted in, in quest of his beloved master. Affection for Mr. Mackaw was not, however, the only cause which induced this entrance.

The household of Château Desir, unused to cassowaries, had neglected to supply Dr. Francia with his usual breakfast, which consisted of half a dozen pounds of rump steaks, a couple of bars of hard iron, some pig lead, and brown stout. The consequence was, the Dictator was sadly famished.

All the ladies screamed; and then Mrs. Felix Lorraine admired the Doctor's violet neck, and the Marchioness looked with an anxious eye on Julie, and Miss Graves, as in duty bound, with an anxious eye on the Marchioness.

There stood the Doctor, quite still, with his large yellow eye fixed on Mr. Mackaw. At length he perceived the cold pasty, and his little black wings began to flutter on the surface of his immense body.

'Che, che, che, che!' said the ornithologist, who did not like the symptoms at all: 'Che, che, che, che, don't be frightened ladies! you see he's muzzled;

che, che, che, che, now, my dear doctor, now, now, now, Franky, Franky, Franky, now go away, go away, that's a dear doctor, che, che, che, che!'

But the large yellow eye grew more flaming and fiery, and the little black wings grew larger and larger; and now the left leg was dashed to and fro with a fearful agitation. Mackaw looked agonised. What a whirr! Francia is on the table! All shriek, the chairs tumble over the ottomans, the Sèvres china is in a thousand pieces, the muzzle is torn off and thrown at Miss Graves; Mackaw's wig is dashed in the clotted cream, and devoured on the spot; and the contents of the boiling urn are poured over the beauteous and beloved Julie!

CHAPTER VIII.

Echoes from the Gay World.

The Honourable Cynthia Courtown to Vivian Grey, Esq.

'Alburies, Oct. 18—.

'Dear Grey,

WE HAVE now been at Alburies for a fortnight. Nothing can be more delightful. Here is everybody in the world that I wish to see, except yourself. The Knightons, with as many outriders as usual: Lady Julia and myself are great allies; I like her amazingly. The Marquess of Grandgoût arrived here last week, with a most delicious party; all the men who write "John Bull." I was rather disappointed at the first sight of Stanislaus Hoax. I had expected, I do not know why, something juvenile and squibbish, when lo! I was introduced to a corpulent individual, with his coat buttoned up to his chin, looking dull, gentlemanlike, and apoplectic. However, on acquaintance, he came out quite rich, sings delightfully, and improvises like a prophet, ten thousand times more entertaining than Pistrucci. We are sworn friends; and I know all the secret history of "John Bull." There is not much, to be sure, that you did not tell

me yourself; but still there are somethings. I must not trust them, however, to paper, and therefore pray dash down to Alburies immediately; I shall be most happy to introduce you to Lord Devildrain. There *was* an interview. What think you of that? Stanislaus told me all, circumstantially, and after dinner; I do not doubt that it is quite true. What would you give for the secret history of the "rather yellow, rather yellow," chanson? I dare not tell it you. It came from a quarter that will quite astound you, and in a very elegant, small, female hand. You remember Lambton did stir very awkwardly in the Lisbon business. Stanislaus wrote all the songs that appeared in the first number, except that; but he never wrote a single line of prose for the first three months: it all came from Vivida Vis.

'I like the Marquess of Grandgoût so much! I hope he will be elevated in the peerage: he looks as if he wanted it so! Poor dear man!

'Oh! do you know I have discovered a liaison between Bull and Blackwood. I am to be in the next Noctes; I forget the words of the chorus exactly, but Courtown is to rhyme with port down, or something of that kind, and then they are to dash their glasses over their heads, give three cheers, and adjourn to whisky-toddy and the Chaldee chamber. How delightful!

'The Prima Donnas are at Cheltenham, looking most respectable. Do you ever see the "Age?" It is not proper for me to take it in. Pray send me down your numbers, and tell me all about it. Is it true that his Lordship paragraphises a little?

'I have not heard from Ernest Clay, which I think very odd. If you write to him, mention this, and

tell him to send me word how Dormer Stanhope behaves at mess. I understand there has been a mêlée, not much; merely a rouette; do get it all out of him.

'Colonel Delmington is at Cheltenham, with the most knowing beard you can possibly conceive; Lady Julia rather patronises him. Lady Doubtful has been turned out of the rooms; fifty challenges in consequence and one duel; missed fire, of course.

'I have heard from Alhambra; he has been wandering about in all directions. He has been to the Lakes, and is now at Edinburgh. He likes Southey. He gave the laureate a quantity of hints for his next volume of the Peninsular War, but does not speak very warmly of Wordsworth: gentlemanly man, but only reads his own poetry.

'Here has been a cousin of yours about us; a young barrister going the circuit; by name Hargrave Grey. The name attracted my notice, and due inquiries having been made and satisfactorily answered, I patronised the limb of law. Fortunate for him! I got him to all the fancy balls and pic-nics that were going on. He was in heaven for a fortnight, and at length, having overstayed his time, he left us, also leaving his bag and only brief behind him. They say he is ruined for life. Write soon.

'Yours ever,

'CYNTHIA COURTOWN.'

ERNEST CLAY, ESQ., TO VIVIAN GREY, ESQ.

'October, 18—.

'DEAR GREY,

'I am sick of key-bugles and country-balls! All the girls in the town are in love with me, or my

foraging cap. I am very much obliged to you for your letter to Kennet, which procured everything I wanted. The family turned out bores, as you had prepared me. I never met such a clever family in my life; the father is summoning up courage to favour the world with a volume of sermons; and Isabella Kennet most satisfactorily proved to me, after an argument of two hours, which for courtesy's sake I fought very manfully, that Sir Walter Scott was not the author of Waverley; and then she vowed as I have heard fifty young literary ladies vow before, that she had "seen the Antiquary in manuscript."

'There has been a slight row to diversify the monotony of our military life. Young Premium, the son of the celebrated loan-monger, has bought in; and Dormer Stanhope, and one or two others equally fresh, immediately anticipated another Battier business; but, with the greatest desire to make a fool of myself, I have a natural repugnance to mimicking the foolery of others; so with some little exertion, and very fortunately for young Premium, I got the tenth voted vulgar, on the score of curiosity, and we were civil to the man. As it turned out, it was all very well, for Premium is a quiet, gentlemanlike fellow enough, and exceedingly useful. He will keep extra grooms for the whole mess, if they want it. He is very grateful to me for what does not deserve any gratitude, and for what gave me no trouble; for I did not defend him from any feeling of kindness: and both the Mounteneys, and young Stapylton Toad, and Augustus, being in the regiment, why, I have very little trouble in commanding a majority, if it come to a division.

'I dined the other day at Old Premium's, who lives near this town in a magnificent old hall; which, however, is not nearly splendid enough for a man who is the creditor of every nation from California to China; and, consequently, the great Mr. Stucco is building a plaster castle for him in another part of the park. Glad am I enough that I was prevailed upon to patronise the Premium; for I think I seldom witnessed a more amusing scene than I did the day I dined there.

'I was ushered through an actual street of servitors, whose liveries were really cloth of gold, and whose elaborately powdered heads would not have disgraced the most ancient mansion in St. James's Square, into a large and crowded saloon. I was, of course, received with miraculous consideration; and the ear of Mrs. Premium seemed to dwell upon the jingling of my spurs (for I am adjutant) as upon exquisite music. It was bonâ fide evidence of "the officers being there."

'Premium is a short, but by no means vulgar-looking man, about fifty, with a high forehead covered with wrinkles, and with eyes deep sunk in his head. I never met a man of apparently less bustle, and of a cooler temperament. He was an object of observation from his very unobtrusiveness. There were, I immediately perceived, a great number of foreigners in the room. They looked much too knowing for Arguelles and Co., and I soon found that they were members of the different embassies, or missions of the various Governments to whose infant existence Premium is foster-father. There were two striking figures in Oriental costume, who were shown to me as the Greek Deputies; not that you

are to imagine that they always appear in this picturesque dress. It was only as a particular favour, and to please Miss Premium (there, Grey, my boy! there is a quarry!), that the illustrious envoys appeared habited this day in their national costume.

'You would have enjoyed the scene. In one part of the room was a naval officer, just hot from the mines of Mexico, and lecturing eloquently on the passing of the Cordillera. In another was a man of science, dilating on the miraculous powers of a newly-discovered amalgamation process to a knot of merchants, who, with bent brows and eager eyes, were already forming a Company for its adoption. Here floated the latest anecdote of Bolivar; and there a murmur of some new movement of Cochrane's. And then the perpetual babble about "rising states," and "new loans," and "enlightened views," and "juncture of the two oceans," and "liberal principles," and "steamboats to Mexico," and the earnest look which every one had in the room. How different to the vacant gaze that we have been accustomed to! I was really particularly struck by the circumstance. Every one at Premium's looked full of some great plan, as if the fate of empires was on his very breath. I hardly knew whether they were most like conspirators, or gamblers, or the lions of a public dinner, conscious of an universal gaze, and consequently looking proportionately interesting. One circumstance particularly struck me: as I was watching the acute countenance of an individual, who young Premium informed me was the Chilian minister, and who was listening with great attention to a dissertation from Captain Tropic, the celebrated traveller, on the feasibility of a railroad over the Andes, I ob-

served a great sensation among those around me; every one shifting, and shuffling, and staring, and assisting in that curious and confusing ceremony called making way." Even Premium appeared a little excited when he came forward with a smile on his face to receive an individual, apparently a foreigner, and who stepped on with great though gracious dignity. Being curious to know who this great man was, I found that this was an ambassador, the representative of a recognised state.

'"Pon my honour, when I saw all this, I could not refrain from moralising on the magic of wealth; and when I just remembered the embryo plot of some young Hussar officers to cut the son of the magician, I rather smiled; but while I, with even greater reverence than all others, was making way for his Excellency, I observed Mrs. Premium looking at my spurs. "Farewell Philosophy!" thought I; "Puppyism for ever!"

'Dinner was at last announced, and the nice etiquette which was observed between recognised states and non-recognised states was really excessively amusing: not only the ambassador would take precedence of the mere political agent, but his Excellency's private secretary was equally tenacious as to the agent's private secretary. At length we were all seated: the spacious dining-room was hung round with portraits of most of the successful revolutionary leaders, and over Mr. Premium was suspended a magnificent portrait of Bolivar. If you could but have seen the plate! By Jove! I have eaten off the silver of most of the first families in England, yet never in my life did it enter into my imagination that it was possible for the most ingenious artist

that ever existed to repeat a crest half so often in a tablespoon as in that of Premium. The crest is a bubble, and really the effect produced by it is most ludicrous.

'I was very much struck at table by the appearance of an individual who came in very late, but who was evidently, by his bearing, no insignificant personage. He was a tall man, with a long hooked nose and high cheek bones, and with an eye (were you ever at the Old Bailey? there you may see its fellow); his complexion looked as if it had been accustomed to the breezes of many climes, and his hair, which had once been red, was now silvered, or rather iron-greyed, not by age. Yet there was in his whole bearing, in his slightest actions, even in the easy, desperate air with which he took a glass of wine, an indefinable something (you know what I mean) which attracted your unremitting attention to him. I was not wrong in my suspicions of his celebrity; for, as Miss Premium, whom I sat next to, whispered, "he was quite a lion." It was Lord Oceanville. What he is after no one knows. Some say he is going to Greece, others whisper an invasion of Paraguay, and others, of course, say other things; perhaps equally correct. I think he is for Greece. I know he is one of the most extraordinary men I ever met with. I am getting prosy. Good-bye! Write soon. Any fun going on? How is Cynthia? I ought to have written. How is Mrs. Felix Lorraine? She is a deuced odd woman!

'Yours faithfully,

'ERNEST CLAY.'

HARGRAVE GREY, ESQ., TO VIVIAN GREY, ESQ.

'October, 18—.

'DEAR VIVIAN,

'You ought not to expect a letter from me. I cannot conceive why you do not occasionally answer your correspondents' letters, if correspondents they may be called. It is really a most unreasonable habit of yours; any one but myself would quarrel with you.

'A letter from Baker met me at this place, and I find that the whole of that most disagreeable and annoying business is arranged. From the promptitude, skill, and energy which are apparent in the whole affair, I suspect I have to thank the very gentleman whom I was just going to quarrel with. You are a good fellow, Vivian, after all. For want of a brief, I sit down to give you a sketch of my adventures on this my first circuit.

'This circuit is a cold and mercantile adventure, and I am disappointed in it. Not so either, for I looked for but little to enjoy. Take one day of my life as a specimen; the rest are mostly alike. The sheriff's trumpets are playing; one, some tune of which I know nothing, and the other no tune at all. I am obliged to turn out at eight. It is the first day of the Assize, so there is some chance of a brief, being a new place. I push my way into court through files of attorneys, as civil to the rogues as possible, assuring them there is plenty of room, though I am at the very moment gasping for breath wedged in in a lane of well-lined waistcoats. I get into court, take my place in the quietest corner, and there I sit, and pass other men's fees and briefs like a twopenny postman, only without pay. Well! 'tis six o'clock, dinner-time, at the bottom of the table, carve for all,

speak to none, nobody speaks to me, must wait till last to sum up, and pay the bill. Reach home quite devoured by spleen, after having heard every one abused who happened to be absent.

'I travelled to this place with Manners, whom I believe you know, and amused myself by getting from him an account of my fellows, anticipating, at the same time, what in fact happened; to wit, that I should afterwards get his character from them. It is strange how freely they deal with each other; that is, the person spoken of being away. I would not have had you see our Stanhope for half a hundred pounds; your jealousy would have been so excited. To say the truth, we are a little rough; our mane wants pulling and our hoofs trimming, but we jog along without performing either operation; and, by dint of rattling the whip against the splash-board, using all one's persuasion of hand and voice, and jerking the bit in his mouth, we do contrive to get into the circuit town, usually, just about the time that the sheriff and his *posse comitatus* are starting to meet my Lord the King's Justice: and that is the worst of it; for their horses are prancing and pawing coursers just out of the stable, sleek skins and smart drivers. We begin to be knocked up just then, and our appearance is the least brilliant of any part of the day. Here I had to pass through a host of these powdered scented fops; and the multitude who had assembled to gaze on the nobler exhibition rather scoffed at our humble vehicle. As Manners had just then been set down to find the inn and lodging, I could not jump out and leave our equipage to its fate, so I settled my cravat, and seemed not to mind it, only I did.

'But I must leave off this nonsense, and attend to his Lordship's charge, which is now about to commence. I have not been able to get you a single good murder, although I have kept a sharp lookout, as you desired me; but there is a chance of a first-rate one at ——n.

'I am quite delighted with Mr. Justice St. Prose. He is at this moment in a most entertaining passion, preparatory to a "conscientious" summing up; and in order that his ideas may not be disturbed, he has very liberally ordered the door-keeper to have the door oiled immediately, at his own expense. Now for my Lord the King's Justice.

'"Gentlemen of the Jury,

'"The noise is insufferable, the heat is intolerable, the door-keepers let the people keep shuffling in, the ducks in the corner are going quack, quack, quack, here's a little girl being tried for her life, and the judge can't hear a word that's said. Bring me my black cap, and I'll condemn her to death instantly."

'"You can't, my Lord," shrieks the infant sinner; "it's only for petty larceny!"

'I have just got an invite from the Kearneys. Congratulate me.

'Dear Vivian, yours faithfully,

'HARGRAVE GREY.'

LADY SCROPE TO VIVIAN GREY, ESQ.

'Ormsby Park, Oct. 18—.

'MY DEAR VIVIAN,

'By desire of Sir Berdmore, I have to request the fulfilment of a promise, upon the hope of which be-

ing performed I have existed through this dull month. Pray, my dear Vivian, come to us immediately. Ormsby has at present little to offer for your entertainment. We have had that unendurable bore Vivacity Dull with us for a whole fortnight. A report of the death of the Lord Chancellor, or a rumour of the production of a new tragedy, has carried him up to town; but whether it be to ask for the seals, or to indite an ingenious prologue to a play which will be condemned the first night, I cannot inform you. I am quite sure he is capable of doing either. However, we shall have other deer in a few days.

'I believe you have never met the Mounteneys. They have never been at Hallesbrooke since you have been at Desir. They are coming to us immediately. I am sure you will like them very much. Lord Mounteney is one of those kind, easy-minded, accomplished men, who, after all, are nearly the pleasantest society one ever meets. Rather wild in his youth, but with his estate now unincumbered, and himself perfectly domestic. His lady is an unaffected, agreeable woman. But it is Caroline Mounteney whom I wish you particularly to meet. She is one of those delicious creatures who, in spite of not being married, are actually conversable. Spirited, without any affectation or brusquerie; beautiful, and knowing enough to be quite conscious of it; perfectly accomplished, and yet never annoying you with tattle about Bochsa, and Ronzide Begnis, and D'Egville.

'We also expect the Delmonts, the most endurable of the Anglo-Italians that I know. Mrs. Delmont is not always dropping her handkerchief like Lady Gusto, as if she expected a miserable *cavalier servente* to be constantly upon his knees; or giving those odious ex-

pressive looks, which quite destroy my nerves whenever I am under the same roof as that horrible Lady Soprano. There is a little too much talk, to be sure, about Roman churches, and newly-discovered Mosaics, and Abbate Maii, but still we cannot expect perfection. There are reports going about that Ernest Clay is either ruined or going to be married. Perhaps both are true. Young Premium has nearly lost his character by driving a square-built, striped green thing, drawn by one horse. Ernest Clay got him through this terrible affair. What can be the reasons of the Sieur Ernest's excessive amiability?

'Both the young Mounteneys are with their regiment, but Aubrey Vere is coming to us, and I have half a promise from ——; but I know you never speak to unmarried men, so why do I mention them? Let me, I beseech you, my dear Vivian, have a few days of you to myself before Ormsby is full, and before you are introduced to Caroline Mounteney. I did not think it was possible that I could exist so long without seeing you; but you really must not try me too much, or I shall quarrel with you. I have received all your letters, which are very, very agreeable; but I think rather, rather impudent. Adieu!

'HARRIETTE SCROPE.'

HORACE GREY, ESQ., TO VIVIAN GREY, ESQ.

'Paris, Oct. 18—.

'MY DEAR VIVIAN,

'I have received yours of the 9th, and have read it with mixed feelings of astonishment and sorrow.

'You are now, my dear son, a member of what is called the great world; society formed on anti-

social principles. Apparently you have possessed yourself of the object of your wishes; but the scenes you live in are very moveable; the characters you associate with are all masked; and it will always be doubtful whether you can retain that long which has been obtained by some slippery artifice. Vivian, you are a juggler; and the deceptions of your sleight-of-hand tricks depend upon instantaneous motions.

'When the selfish combine with the selfish, bethink you how many projects are doomed to disappointment! how many cross interests baffle the parties at the same time joined together without ever uniting. What a mockery is their love! but how deadly are their hatreds! All this great society, with whom so young an adventurer has trafficked, abate nothing of their price in the slavery of their service and the sacrifice of violated feelings. What sleepless nights has it cost you to win over the disobliged, to conciliate the discontented, to cajole the contumacious! You may smile at the hollow flatteries, answering to flatteries as hollow, which like bubbles when they touch, dissolve into nothing; but tell me, Vivian, what has the self-tormentor felt at the laughing treacheries which force a man down into self-contempt?

'Is it not obvious, my dear Vivian, that true Fame and true Happiness must rest upon the imperishable social affections? I do not mean that coterie celebrity which paltry minds accept as fame; but that which exists independent of the opinions or the intrigues of individuals: nor do I mean that glittering show of perpetual converse with the world which some miserable wanderers call Happiness; but that which can only be drawn from the sacred and solitary fountain of your own feelings.

'Active as you have now become in the great scenes of human affairs, I would not have you be guided by any fanciful theories of morals or of human nature. Philosophers have amused themselves by deciding on human actions by systems; but, as these systems are of the most opposite natures, it is evident that each philosopher, in reflecting his own feelings in the system he has so elaborately formed, has only painted his own character.

'Do not, therefore, conclude, with Hobbes and Mandeville, that man lives in a state of civil warfare with man; nor, with Shaftesbury, adorn with a poetical philosophy our natural feelings. Man is neither the vile nor the excellent being which he sometimes imagines himself to be. He does not so much act by system as by sympathy. If this creature cannot always feel for others, he is doomed to feel for himself; and the vicious are, at least, blessed with the curse of remorse.

'You are now inspecting one of the worst portions of society in what is called the great world (St. Giles' is bad, but of another kind), and it may be useful, on the principle that the actual sight of brutal ebriety was supposed to have inspired youth with the virtue of temperance; on the same principle that the Platonist, in the study of deformity, conceived the beautiful. Let me warn you not to fall into the usual error of youth in fancying that the circle you move in is precisely the world itself. Do not imagine that there are not other beings, whose benevolent principle is governed by finer sympathies, by more generous passions, and by those nobler emotions which really constitute all our public and private virtues. I give you this hint, lest, in your present

society, you might suppose these virtues were merely historical.

'Once more, I must beseech you not to give loose to any elation of mind. The machinery by which you have attained this unnatural result must be so complicated that in the very tenth hour you will find yourself stopped in some part where you never counted on an impediment; and the want of a slight screw or a little oil will prevent you from accomplishing your magnificent end.

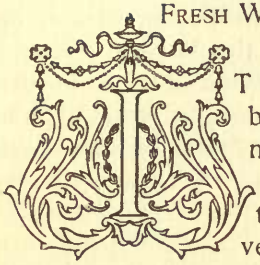
'We are, and have been, very dull here. There is every probability of Madame de Genlis writing more volumes than ever. I called on the old lady, and was quite amused with the enthusiasm of her imbecility. Chateaubriand is getting what you call a bore; and the whole city is mad about a new opera by Boieldieu. Your mother sends her love, and desires me to say, that the salmi of woodcocks, *à la* Lucullus, which you write about, does not differ from the practice here in vogue. How does your cousin Hargrave prosper on his circuit? The Delmingtons are here, which makes it very pleasant for your mother, as well as for myself; for it allows me to hunt over the old bookshops at my leisure. There are no new books worth sending you, or they would accompany this; but I would recommend you to get Meyer's new volume from Treüttel and Wurtz, and continue to make notes as you read it. Give my compliments to the Marquess, and believe me,

'Your affectionate father,

'HORACE GREY.'

CHAPTER IX.

Fresh Woods and Pastures New.



IT WAS impossible for any human being to behave with more kindness than the Marquess of Carabas did to Vivian Grey after that young gentleman's short conversation with Mrs. Felix Lorraine in the conservatory. The only feeling which seemed to actuate the Peer was an eager desire to compensate, by his present conduct, for any past misunderstanding, and he loaded his young friend with all possible favour. Still, Vivian was about to quit Château Desir; and in spite of all that had passed, he was extremely loth to leave his noble friend under the guardianship of his female one.

About this time, the Duke and Duchess of Juggernaut, the very pink of aristocracy, the wealthiest, the proudest, the most ancient, and most pompous couple in Christendom, honoured Château Desir with their presence for two days; only two days, making the Marquess's mansion a convenient resting-place in one of their princely progresses to one of their princely castles.

Vivian contrived to gain the heart of her Grace by his minute acquaintance with the Juggernaut pedi-

gree; and having taken the opportunity, in one of their conversations, to describe Mrs. Felix Lorraine as the most perfect specimen of divine creation with which he was acquainted, at the same time the most amusing and the most amiable of women, that lady was honoured with an invitation to accompany her Grace to Himalaya Castle. As this was the greatest of all possible honours, and as Desir was now very dull, Mrs. Felix Lorraine accepted the invitation, or rather obeyed the command, for the Marquess would not hear of a refusal, Vivian having dilated in the most energetic terms on the opening which now presented itself of gaining the Juggernaut. The coast being thus cleared, Vivian set off the next day for Sir Berdmore Scrope's.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

Politics and Literature.

THE important hour drew nigh. Christmas was to be passed by the Carabas family, the Beaconsfields, the Scropes, and the Clevelands at Lord Courtown's villa at Richmond; at which place, on account of its vicinity to the metropolis, the Viscount had determined to make out the holidays, notwithstanding the Thames entered his kitchen windows, and the Donna del Lago was acted in the theatre with real water, Cynthia Courtown performing Elena, paddling in a punt.

'Let us order our horses, Cleveland, round to the Piccadilly gate, and walk through the Guards. I must stretch my legs. That bore, Horace Buttonhole, captured me in Pall Mall East, and has kept me in the same position for upwards of half an hour. I shall make a note to blackball him at the Athenæum. How is Mrs. Cleveland?'

'Extremely well. She goes down to Buckhurst Lodge with Lady Carabas. Is not that Lord Lowersdale?'

'His very self. He is going to call on Vivida Vis, I have no doubt. Lowersdale is a man of very considerable talent; much more than the world gives him credit for.'

'And he doubtless finds a very able counsellor in Monsieur le Sécrétaire?'

'Can you name a better one?'

'You rather patronise Vivida, I think, Grey?'

'Patronise him! he is my political pet!'

'And yet Kerrison tells me you reviewed the Suffolk papers in the Edinburgh.'

'So I did; what of that? I defended them in Blackwood.'

'This, then, is the usual method of you literary gentlemen. Thank God! I never could write a line.'

'York House rises proudly; if York House be its name.'

'This confounded Catholic Question is likely to give us a great deal of trouble, Grey. It is perfect madness for us to advocate the cause of the "six millions of hereditary bondsmen;" and yet, with not only the Marchese, but even Courtown and Beaconsfield committed, it is, to say the least, a very delicate business.'

'Very delicate, certainly; but there are some precedents, I suspect, Cleveland, for the influence of a party being opposed to measures which the heads of that party had pledged themselves to adopt.'

'Does old Gifford still live at Pimlico, Grey?'

'Still.'

'He is a splendid fellow, after all.'

'Certainly, a mind of great powers, but bigoted.'

'Oh, yes! I know exactly what you are going to say. It is the fashion, I am aware, to abuse the old

gentleman. He is the Earl of Eldon of literature; not the less loved because a little vilified. But, when I just remember what Gifford has done; when I call to mind the perfect and triumphant success of everything he has undertaken; the anti-Jacobin, the Baviad and Mæviad, the Quarterly; all palpable hits, on the very jugular; I hesitate before I speak of William Gifford in any other terms, or in any other spirit, than those of admiration and of gratitude.

'And to think, Grey, that the Tory Administration and the Tory party of Great Britain should never, by one single act, or in a single instance, have indicated that they were in the least aware that the exertions of such a man differed in the slightest degree from those of Hunt and Hone! Of all the delusions which flourish in this mad world, the delusion of that man is the most frantic who voluntarily, and of his own accord, supports the interest of a party. I mention this to you because it is the rock on which all young politicians strike. Fortunately, you enter life under different circumstances from those which usually attend most political debutants. You have your connections formed and your views ascertained. But if, by any chance, you find yourself independent and unconnected, never, for a moment, suppose that you can accomplish your objects by coming forward, unsolicited, to fight the battle of a party. They will cheer your successful exertions, and then smile at your youthful zeal; or, crossing themselves for the unexpected succour, be too cowardly to reward their unexpected champion. No, Grey; make them fear you, and they will kiss your feet. There is no act of treachery or meanness of which a political party is not capable; for in politics there is no honour.

'As to Gifford, I am surprised at their conduct towards him, although I know better than most men of what wood a minister is made, and how much reliance may be placed upon the gratitude of a party: but Canning; from Canning I certainly did expect different conduct.'

'Oh, Canning! I love the man: but as you say, Cleveland, ministers have short memories, and Canning's—that was Antilles that just passed us; apropos of whom, I quite rejoice that the Marquess has determined to take such a decided course on the West India Question.'

'Oh, yes! curse your East India sugar.'

'To be sure; slavery and sweetmeats for ever!'

'But, aside with joking, Grey, I really think, that if any man of average ability dare rise in the House, and rescue many of the great questions of the day from what Dugald Stuart or Disraeli would call the spirit of Political Religionism, with which they are studiously mixed up, he would not fail to make a great impression upon the House, and a still greater one upon the country.'

'I quite agree with you; and certainly I should recommend commencing with the West India Question. Singular state of affairs when even Canning can only insinuate his opinion when the very existence of some of our most valuable colonies is at stake, and when even his insinuations are only indulged with an audience on the condition that he favours the House with an introductory discourse of twenty minutes on "the divine Author of our faith," and an *éloge* of equal length on the "Génie du Christianisme," in a style worthy of Chateaubriand.'

'Miserable work, indeed! I have got a pamphlet

on the West India Question sent me this morning. Do you know any raving lawyer, any mad Master in Chancery, or something of the kind, who meddles in these affairs?'

'Oh! Stephen! a puddle in a storm! He is for a crusade for the regeneration of the Antilles; the most forcible of feebles, the most energetic of drivellers; Velluti acting Pietro l'Eremita.'

'Do you know, by any chance, whether Southey's Vindiciæ is out yet? I wanted to look it over during the holidays.'

'Not out, though it has been advertised some time; but what do you expect?'

'Nay, it is an interesting controversy, as controversies go. Not exactly Milton and Salmasius; but fair enough.'

'I do not know. It has long degenerated into a mere personal bickering between the Laureate and Butler. Southey is, of course, revelling in the idea of writing an English work with a Latin title; and that, perhaps, is the only circumstance for which the controversy is prolonged.'

'But Southey, after all, is a man of splendid talents.'

'Doubtless; the most philosophical of bigots, and the most poetical of prose writers.'

'Apropos to the Catholic Question, there goes Colonial Bother'em, trying to look like Prince Metternich; a decided failure.'

'What can keep him in town?'

'Writing letters, I suppose. Heaven preserve me from receiving any of them!'

'Is it true, then, that his letters are of the awful length that is whispered?'

'True! Oh! they are something beyond all conception! Perfect epistolary boa constrictors. I speak with feeling, for I have myself suffered under their voluminous windings.'

'Have you seen his quarto volume: "The Cure for the Catholic Question?"'

'Yes.'

'If you have it, lend it to me. What kind of thing is it?'

'Oh! what should it be! ingenious and imbecile. He advises the Catholics, in the old nursery language, to behave like good boys; to open their mouths and shut their eyes, and see what God will send them.'

'Well, that is the usual advice. Is there nothing more characteristic of the writer?'

'What think you of a proposition of making Jockey of Norfolk Patriarch of England, and of an ascertained *credo* for our Catholic fellow-subjects? Ingenious, is not it?'

'Have you seen Puff's new volume of Ariosto?'

'I have. What could possibly have induced Mr. Partenopex Puff to have undertaken such a duty? Mr. Puff is a man destitute of poetical powers, possessing no vigour of language, and gifted with no happiness of expression. His translation is hard, dry, and husky, as the outside of a cocoa-nut. I am amused to see the excellent tact with which the public has determined not to read his volumes, in spite of the incessant exertions of a certain set to ensure their popularity; but the time has gone by when the smug coterie could create a reputation.'

'Do you think the time ever existed, Cleveland?'

'What could have seduced Puff into being so ambitious? I suppose his admirable knowledge of Italian;

as if a man were entitled to strike a die for the new sovereign merely because he was aware how much alloy might legally debase its carats of pure gold.'

'I never can pardon Puff for that little book on Cats. The idea was admirable; but, instead of one of the most delightful volumes that ever appeared, to take up a dull, tame compilation from Bingley's Animal Biography!'

'Yes! and the impertinence of dedicating such a work to the Officers of His Majesty's Household troops! Considering the quarter from whence it proceeded, I certainly did not expect much, but still I thought that there was to be some little *esprit*. The poor Guards! how nervous they must have been at the announcement! What could have been the point of that dedication?'

'I remember a most interminable proser, who was blessed with a very sensible-sounding voice, and who, on the strength of that, and his correct and constant emphases, was considered by the world, for a great time, as a sage. At length it was discovered that he was quite the reverse. Mr. Puff's wit is very like this man's wisdom. You take up one of his little books, and you fancy, from its title page, that it is going to be very witty; as you proceed, you begin to suspect that the man is only a wag, and then, surprised at not "seeing the point," you have a shrewd suspicion that he is a great hand at dry humour. It is not till you have closed the volume that you wonder who it is that has had the hardihood to intrude such imbecility upon an indulgent world.'

'Come, come! Mr. Puff is a worthy gentleman. Let him cease to dusk the radiancy of Ariosto's sunny stanzas, and I shall be the first man who will

do justice to his merits. He certainly tattles prettily about tenses and terminations, and is not an inelegant grammarian.'

'Our literature, I think, is at a low ebb.'

'There is nothing like a fall of stocks to affect what it is the fashion to style the Literature of the present day, a fungus production which has flourished from the artificial state of our society, the mere creature of our imaginary wealth. Everybody being very rich, has afforded to be very literary, books being considered a luxury almost as elegant and necessary as ottomans, bonbons, and pier-glasses. Consols at 100 were the origin of all book societies. The Stockbrokers' ladies took off the quarto travels and the hot-pressed poetry. They were the patronesses of your patent ink and your wire-wove paper. That is all past. Twenty per cent. difference in the value of our public securities from this time last year, that little incident has done more for the restoration of the old English feeling, than all the exertions of Church and State united. There is nothing like a fall in Consols to bring the blood of our good people of England into cool order. It is your grand state medicine, your veritable Doctor Sangrado!

'A fall in stocks! and halt! to "the spread of knowledge!" and "the progress of liberal principles" is like that of a man too late for post-horses. A fall in stocks! and where are your London Universities, and your Mechanics' Institutes, and your new Docks? Where your philosophy, your philanthropy, and your competition? National prejudices revive as national prosperity decreases. If the Consols were at 60 we should be again bellowing, God save the King! eating roast beef, and damning the French.'

'And you imagine literature is equally affected, Grey?'

'Clearly. We were literary because we were rich. Amid the myriad of volumes which issued monthly from the press, what one was not written for the mere hour? It is all very well to buy mechanical poetry and historical novels when our purses have a plethora; but now, my dear fellow, depend upon it, the game is up. We have no scholars now, no literary recluses, no men who ever appear to think. "Scribble, scribble, scribble," as the Duke of Cumberland said to Gibbon, should be the motto of the mighty "nineteenth century."'

'Southey, I think, Grey, is an exception.'

'By no means. Southey is a political writer, a writer for a particular purpose. All his works, from those in three volumes quarto to those in one duodecimo, are alike political pamphlets.'

'We certainly want a master-spirit to set us right, Grey. We want Byron.'

'There was the man! And that such a man should be lost to us at the very moment that he had begun to discover why it had pleased the Omnipotent to have endowed him with such powers!'

'If one thing were more characteristic of Byron's mind than another, it was his strong, shrewd, common sense; his pure, unalloyed sagacity.'

'You knew him, I think, Cleveland?'

'Well, I was slightly acquainted with him when in England; slightly, however, for I was then very young. But many years afterwards I met him in Italy. It was at Pisa, just before he left that place for Genoa. I was then very much struck at the alteration in his appearance.'

'Indeed.'

'Yes; his face was swollen, and he was getting fat. His hair was grey, and his countenance had lost that spiritual expression which it once eminently possessed. His teeth were decaying; and he said that if ever he came to England it would be to consult Wayte about them. I certainly was very much struck at his alteration for the worse. Besides, he was dressed in the most extraordinary manner.'

'Slovenly?'

'Oh, no, no, no! in the most dandified style that you can conceive; but not that of an English dandy either. He had on a magnificent foreign foraging cap, which he wore in the room, but his grey curls were quite perceptible; and a frogged surtout; and he had a large gold chain round his neck, and pushed into his waistcoat pocket. I imagined, of course, that a glass was attached to it; but I afterwards found that it bore nothing but a quantity of trinkets. He had also another gold chain tight round his neck, like a collar.'

'How odd! And did you converse much with him?'

'I was not long at Pisa, but we never parted, and there was only one subject of conversation, England, England, England. I never met a man in whom the *maladie du pays* was so strong. Byron was certainly at this time restless and discontented. He was tired of his dragoon captains and pensioned poetasters, and he dared not come back to England with what he considered a tarnished reputation. His only thought was of some desperate exertion to clear himself: it was for this he went to Greece. When I was with him he was in correspondence with some friends in

England about the purchase of a large tract of land in Colombia. He affected a great admiration of Bolivar.'

'Who, by-the-bye, is a great man.'

'Assuredly.'

'Your acquaintance with Byron must have been one of the gratifying incidents of your life, Cleveland?'

'Certainly; I may say with Friar Martin, in Goetz of Berlichingen, "The sight of him touched my heart. It is a pleasure to have seen a great man."'

'Hobhouse was a faithful friend to him?'

'His conduct has been beautiful; and Byron had a thorough affection for him, in spite of a few squibs and a few drunken speeches, which damned good-natured friends have always been careful to repeat.'

'The loss of Byron can never be retrieved. He was indeed a real man; and when I say this, I award him the most splendid character which human nature need aspire to. At least, I, for my part, have no ambition to be considered either a divinity or an angel; and truly, when I look round upon the creatures alike effeminate in mind and body of which the world is, in general, composed, I fear that even my ambition is too exalted. Byron's mind was like his own ocean, sublime in its yesty madness, beautiful in its glittering summer brightness, mighty in the lone magnificence of its waste of waters, gazed upon from the magic of its own nature, yet capable of representing, but as in a glass darkly, the natures of all others.'

'Hyde Park is greatly changed since I was a dandy, Vivian. Pray, do the Misses Otranto still live in that house?'

'Yes; blooming as ever.'

'It is the fashion to abuse Horace Walpole, but I really think him the most delightful writer that ever existed. I wonder who is to be the Horace Walpole of the present century? some one, perhaps, we least suspect.'

'Vivida Vis, think you?'

'More than probable. I will tell you who ought to be writing Memoirs; Lord Dropmore. Does my Lord Manfred keep his mansion there, next to the Misses Otranto?'

'I believe so, and lives there.'

'I knew him in Germany; a singular man, and not understood. Perhaps he does not understand himself. I see our horses.'

'I will join you in an instant, Cleveland. I just want to speak one word to Osborne, whom I see coming down here. Well, Osborne, I must come and knock you up one of these mornings. I have got a commission for you from Lady Julia Knighton, to which you must pay particular attention.'

'Well, Mr. Grey, how does Lady Julia like the bay mare?'

'Very much, indeed; but she wants to know what you have done about the chestnut.'

'Oh! put it off, sir, in the prettiest style, on young Mr. Feoffment, who has just married, and taken a house in Gower Street. He wanted a bit of blood; hope he likes it!'

'Hope he does, Jack. There is a particular favour which you can do me, Osborne, and which I am sure you will. Ernest Clay; you know Ernest Clay; a most excellent fellow is Ernest Clay, you know, and a great friend of yours, Osborne; I wish you would just step down to Connaught Place, and look at those

bays he bought of Harry Mounteney. He is in a little trouble, and we must do what we can for him; you know he is an excellent fellow, and a great friend of yours. Thank you, I knew you would. Good morning; remember Lady Julia. So you really fitted young Feoffment with the chestnut; well, that was admirable! Good morning.'

'I do not know whether you care for these things at all, Cleveland, but Premium, a famous millionaire, has gone this morning, for I know not how much! Half the new world will be ruined; and in this old one a most excellent fellow, my friend Ernest Clay. He was engaged to Premium's daughter, his last resource, and now, of course, it is all up with him.'

'I was at College with his brother, Augustus Clay. He is a nephew of Lord Mounteney's, is he not?'

'The very same. Poor fellow! I do not know what we must do for him. I think I shall advise him to change his name to Clay-*ville;* and if the world ask him the reason of the euphonious augmentation, why, he can swear it was to distinguish himself from his brothers. Too many roués of the same name will never do. And now spurs to our steeds! for we are going at least three miles out of our way, and I must collect my senses and arrange my curls before dinner, for I have to flirt with at least three fair ones.'

CHAPTER II.

Thrust and Parry.

HESE conversations play the very deuce with one's story. We had intended to have commenced this book with something quite terrific, a murder or a marriage; and all our great ideas have ended in a lounge. After all, it is, perhaps, the most natural termination. In life, surely man is not always as monstrously busy as he appears to be in novels and romances. We are not always in action, not always making speeches, or making money, or making war, or making love. Occasionally we talk, about the weather generally; sometimes about ourselves; oftener about our friends; as often about our enemies, at least, those who have any; which, in my opinion, is the vulgarest of all possessions.

But we must get on.

Mr. Cleveland and Mrs. Felix Lorraine again met, and the gentleman scarcely appeared to be aware that this meeting was not their first. The lady sighed and remonstrated. She reproached Mr. Cleveland with passages of letters. He stared, and deigned not a reply to an artifice which he considered equally audacious and shallow. There was a scene. Vivian was forced to interfere; but as he deprecated all ex-

planation, his interference was of little avail; and, as it was ineffectual for one party and uncalled for by the other, it was, of course, not encouraged. The presence of Mrs. Cleveland did not tend to assist Mrs. Felix in that self-control which, with all her wildness, she could appositely practise. In the presence of the Clevelands she was fitful, capricious, perplexing; sometimes impertinent, sometimes humble; but always ill at ease, and never charming.

Peculiar, however, as was her conduct in this particular relation, it was in all others, at this moment, most exemplary. Her whole soul seemed concentrated in the success of the approaching struggle. No office was too mechanical for her attention, or too elaborate for her enthusiastic assiduity. Her attentions were not confined merely to Vivian and the Marquess, but were lavished with equal generosity on their colleagues. She copied letters for Sir Berdmore, and composed letters for Lord Courtown, and construed letters to Lord Beaconsfield; they, in return, echoed her praises to her delighted relative, who was daily congratulated on the possession of 'such a fascinating sister-in-law.'

'Well, Vivian,' said Mrs. Lorraine, to that young gentleman, the day previous to his departure from Buckhurst Lodge, 'you are going to leave me behind you.'

'Indeed!'

'Yes! I hope you will not want me. I am very annoyed at not being able to go to town with you, but Lady Courtown is so pressing! and I have really promised so often to stay a week with her, that I thought it was better to make out my promise at once than in six months hence.'

'Well! I am exceedingly sorry, for you really are

so useful! and the interest you take in everything is so encouraging, that I very much fear we shall not be able to get on without you. The important hour draws nigh.'

'It does, indeed, Vivian; and I assure you that there is no person awaiting it with intenser interest than myself. I little thought,' she added, in a low but distinct voice, 'I little thought, when I first reached England, that I should ever again be interested in anything in this world.'

Vivian was silent, for he had nothing to say.

'Vivian!' very briskly resumed Mrs. Lorraine, 'I shall get you to frank all my letters for me. I shall never trouble the Marquess again. Do you know, it strikes me you will make a very good speaker!'

'You flatter me exceedingly; suppose you give me a few lessons.'

'But you must leave off some of your wicked tricks, Vivian! You must not improvise parliamentary papers!'

'Improvise papers, Mrs. Lorraine! What can you mean?'

'Oh! nothing. I never mean anything.'

'But you must have had some meaning.'

'Some meaning! Yes, I dare say I had; I meant —I meant—do you think it will rain to-day?'

'Every prospect of a hard frost. I never knew before that I was an improvisatore.'

'Nor I. Have you heard from papa lately? I suppose he is quite in spirits at your success?'

'My father is a man who seldom gives way to any elation of mind.'

'Ah, indeed! a philosopher, I have no doubt, like his son.'

'I have no claims to the title of philosopher, although I have had the advantage of studying in the school of Mrs. Felix Lorraine.'

'What do you mean? If I thought you meant to be impertinent, I really would — but I excuse you; I think the boy means well.'

'The boy "means nothing; he never means anything."'

'Come, Vivian! we are going to part. Do not let us quarrel the last day. There, there is a sprig of myrtle for you!

What! not accept my foolish flower?
Nay, then, I am indeed unblest!

and now you want it all! Unreasonable young man! If I were not the kindest lady in the land I should tear this sprig into a thousand pieces sooner; but come, my child! you shall have it. There! it looks quite imposing in your button-hole. How handsome you look to-day!'

'How agreeable you are! I love compliments!'

'Ah, Vivian! will you never give me credit for anything but a light and callous heart? Will you never be convinced that — that — but why make this humiliating confession? Oh! no, let me be misunderstood for ever! The time may come when Vivian Grey will find that Amalia Lorraine was ——'

'Was what, madam?'

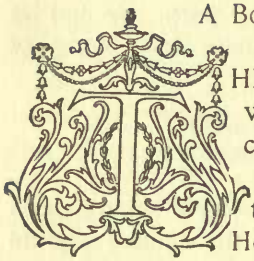
'You shall choose the word, Vivian.'

'Say, then, my friend.'

''Tis a monosyllable full of meaning, and I will not quarrel with it. And now, adieu! Heaven prosper you! Believe me, that my first thoughts and my last are for you and of you!'

CHAPTER III.

A Bolt from the Blue.



'HIS is very kind of you, Grey! I was afraid my note might not have caught you. You have not breakfasted? Really I wish you would take up your quarters in Carabas House, for I want you now every moment.'

'What is the urgent business of this morning?'

'Oh! I have seen Bromley.'

'Hah!'

'And everything most satisfactory. I did not go into detail; I left that for you: but I ascertained sufficient to convince me that management is now alone required.'

'Well, my Lord, I trust that will not be wanting.'

'No, Vivian; you have opened my eyes to the situation in which fortune has placed me. The experience of every day only proves the truth and soundness of your views. Fortunate, indeed, was the hour in which we met.'

'My Lord, I do trust that it was a meeting which neither of us will live to repent.'

'Impossible! my dear friend. I do not hesitate to say that I would not change my present lot for that

of any Peer of this realm; no, not for that of His Majesty's most favoured counsellor. What! with my character and my influence, and my connections, I to be a tool! I, the Marquess of Carabas! I say nothing of my own powers; but, as you often most justly and truly observe, the world has had the opportunity of judging of them; and I think I may recur, without vanity, to the days in which my voice had some weight in the Royal Councils. And, as I have often remarked, I have friends, I have you, Vivian. My career is before you. I know what I should have done at your age; not to say what I did do. I to be a tool! The very last person that ought to be a tool. But I see my error: you have opened my eyes, and blessed be the hour in which we met. But we must take care how we act, Vivian; we must be wary; eh! Vivian, wary, wary. People must know what their situations are; eh! Vivian?'

'Exceedingly useful knowledge; but I do not exactly understand the particular purport of your Lordship's last observation.'

'You do not, eh?' asked the Peer; and he fixed his eyes as earnestly and expressively as he possibly could upon his young companion. 'Well, I thought not. I was positive it was not true,' continued the Marquess in a murmur.

'What, my Lord?'

'Oh! nothing, nothing; people talk at random, at random, at random. I feel confident you quite agree with me; eh! Vivian?'

'Really, my Lord, I fear I am unusually dull this morning.'

'Dull! no, no; you quite agree with me. I feel confident you do. People must be taught what their

situations are; that is what I was saying, Vivian. My Lord Courtown,' added the Marquess, in a whisper, 'is not to have everything his own way; eh! Vivian?'

'Oh, oh!' thought Vivian; 'this, then, is the result of that admirable creature, Mrs. Felix Lorraine, staying a week with her dear friend, Lady Courtown.' 'My Lord it would be singular if, in the Carabas party, the Carabas interest was not the predominant one.'

'I knew you thought so. I could not believe for a minute that you could think otherwise: but some people take such strange ideas into their heads, I cannot account for them. I felt confident what would be your opinion. My Lord Courtown is not to carry everything before him in the spirit that I have lately observed; or rather, in the spirit which I understand, from very good authority, is exhibited. Eh! Vivian; that is your opinion, is not it?'

'Oh! my dear Marquess, we must think alike on this, as on all points.'

'I knew it. I felt confident as to your sentiments upon this subject. I cannot conceive why some people take such strange ideas into their heads! I knew that you could not disagree with me upon this point. No, no, no; my Lord Courtown must feel which is the predominant interest, as you so well express it. How choice your expressions always are! I do not know how it is, but you always hit upon the right expression, Vivian. The predominant interest, the pre-do-mi-nant in-te-rest. To be sure. What! with my high character and connections, with my stake in society, was it to be expected that I, the Marquess of Carabas, was going to make any move which compro-

mised the predominancy of my interests? No, no, no, my Lord Courtown; the predominant interest must be kept predominant; eh! Vivian?'

'To be sure, my Lord; explicitness and decision will soon arrange any *désagrémens*.'

'I have been talking to Lady Carabas, Vivian, upon the expediency of her opening the season early. I think a course of parliamentary dinners would produce a good effect. It gives a tone to a political party.'

'Certainly; the science of political gastronomy has never been sufficiently studied.'

'Egad! Vivian, I am in such spirits this morning. This business of Bromley so delights me; and finding you agree with me about Lord Courtown, I was confident as to your sentiments on that point. But some people take such strange ideas into their heads! To be sure, to be sure, the predominant interest, mine, that is to say ours, Vivian, is the predominant interest. I have no idea of the predominant interest not being predominant; that would be singular! I knew you would agree with me; we always agree. 'Twas a lucky hour when we met. Two minds so exactly alike! I was just your very self when I was young; and as for you, my career is before you.'

Here entered Mr. Sadler with the letters.

'One from Courtown. I wonder if he has seen Mounteney. Mounteney is a very good-natured fellow, and I think might be managed. Ah! I wish you could get hold of him, Vivian; you would soon bring him round. What it is to have brains, Vivian!' and here the Marquess shook his head very pompously, and at the same time tapped very significantly on his left temple. 'Hah! what, what is all

this? Here, read it, read it, man; I have no head to-day.'

Vivian took the letter, and his quick eye dashed through its contents in a second. It was from Lord Courtown, and dated far in the country. It talked of private communications, and premature conduct, and the suspicious, not to say dishonourable, behaviour of Mr. Vivian Grey: it trusted that such conduct was not sanctioned by his Lordship, but 'nevertheless obliged to act with decision, regretted the necessity,' &c. &c. &c. &c. In short, Lord Courtown had deserted, and recalled his pledge as to the official appointment promised to Mr. Cleveland, 'because that promise was made while he was the victim of delusions created by the representations of Mr. Grey.'

'What can all this mean, my Lord?'

The Marquess swore a fearful oath, and threw another letter.

'This is from Lord Beaconsfield, my Lord,' said Vivian, with a face pallid as death, 'and apparently the composition of the same writer; at least, it is the same tale, the same *refacimento* of lies, and treachery, and cowardice, doled out with diplomatic *politesse*. But I will off to —— shire instantly. It is not yet too late to save everything. This is Wednesday; on Thursday afternoon I shall be at Norwood Park. Thank God! I came this morning.'

The face of the Marquess, who was treacherous as the wind, seemed already to indicate 'Adieu! Mr. Vivian Grey!' but that countenance exhibited some very different passions when it glanced over the contents of the next epistle. There was a tremendous oath and a dead silence. His Lordship's florid countenance turned as pale as that of his companion.

The perspiration stole down in heavy drops. He gasped for breath!

'Good God! my Lord, what is the matter?'

'The matter!' howled the Marquess, 'the matter! That I have been a vain, weak, miserable fool!' and then there was another oath, and he flung the letter to the other side of the table.

It was the official *congé* of the Most Noble Sidney Marquess of Carabas. His Majesty had no longer any occasion for his services. His successor was Lord Courtown!

We will not affect to give any description of the conduct of the Marquess of Carabas at this moment. He raved, he stamped, he blasphemed! but the whole of his abuse was levelled against his former 'monstrous clever' young friend; of whose character he had so often boasted that his own was the prototype, but who was now an adventurer, a swindler, a scoundrel, a liar, a base, deluding, flattering, fawning villain, &c. &c. &c. &c.

'My Lord!' said Vivian.

'I will not hear you; out on your fair words! They have duped me enough already. That I, with my high character and connections! that I, the Marquess of Carabas, should have been the victim of the arts of a young scoundrel!'

Vivian's fist was once clenched, but it was only for a moment. The Marquess leant back in his chair with his eyes shut. In the agony of the moment a projecting tooth of his upper jaw had forced itself through his under lip, and from the wound the blood was flowing freely over his dead-white countenance. Vivian left the room.

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Lorraine on the Rack.

E STOPPED one moment on the landing place, ere he was about to leave the house for ever.

'Tis all over! and so, Vivian Grey, your game is up! and to die, too, like a dog! a woman's dupe! Were I a despot, I should perhaps satiate my vengeance upon this female fiend with the assistance of the rack, but that cannot be; and, after all, it would be but a poor revenge in one who has worshipped the Empire of the Intellect to vindicate the agony I am now enduring upon the base body of a woman. No! 'tis not all over. There is yet an intellectual rack of which few dream: far, far more terrific than the most exquisite contrivances of Parysatis. Jacinte,' said he to a female attendant that passed, 'is your mistress at home?'

'She is, sir.'

''Tis well,' said Vivian, and he sprang upstairs.

'Health to the lady of our love!' said Vivian Grey, as he entered the elegant boudoir of Mrs. Felix Lorraine. 'In spite of the easterly wind, which has spoiled my beauty for the season, I could not refrain

from inquiring after your prosperity before I went to the Marquess. Have you heard the news?'

'News! no; what news?'

''Tis a sad tale,' said Vivian, with a melancholy voice.

'Oh! then, pray do not tell it me. I am in no humour for sorrow to-day. Come! a bon-mot, or a calembourg, or exit Mr. Vivian Grey.'

'Well, then, good morning! I am off for a black crape, or a Barcelona kerchief. Mrs. Cleveland is dead.'

'Dead!' exclaimed Mrs. Lorraine.

'Dead! She died last night, suddenly. Is it not horrible?'

'Shocking!' exclaimed Mrs. Lorraine, with a mournful voice and an eye dancing with joy. 'Why, Mr. Grey, I do declare you are weeping.'

'It is not for the departed!'

'Nay, Vivian! for Heaven's sake, what is the matter?'

'My dear Mrs. Lorraine!' but here the speaker's voice was choked with grief, and he could not proceed.

'Pray compose yourself.'

'Mrs. Felix Lorraine, can I speak with you half an hour, undisturbed?'

'By all means. I will ring for Jacinte. Jacinte! mind I am not at home to anyone. Well, what is the matter?'

'O! madam, I must pray your patience; I wish you to shrive a penitent.'

'Good God! Mr. Grey! for Heaven's sake be explicit.'

'For Heaven's sake, for your sake, for my soul's sake, I would be explicit; but explicitness is not

the language of such as I am. Can you listen to a tale of horror? can you promise me to contain yourself?'

'I will promise anything. Pray, pray proceed.'

But in spite of her earnest solicitations her companion was mute. At length he rose from his chair, and leaning on the chimney-piece, buried his face in his hands and wept.

'Vivian,' said Mrs. Lorraine, 'have you seen the Marquess yet?'

'Not yet,' he sobbed; 'I am going to him, but I am in no humour for business this morning.'

'Compose yourself, I beseech you. I will hear everything. You shall not complain of an inattentive or an irritable auditor. Now, my dear Vivian, sit down and tell me all.' She led him to a chair, and then, after stifling his sobs, with a broken voice he proceeded.

'You will recollect, madam, that accident made me acquainted with certain circumstances connected with yourself and Mr. Cleveland. Alas! actuated by the vilest of sentiments, I conceived a violent hatred against that gentleman, a hatred only to be equalled by my passion for you; but I find difficulty in dwelling upon the details of this sad story of jealousy and despair.'

'Oh! speak, speak! compensate for all you have done by your present frankness; be brief, be brief.'

'I will be brief,' said Vivian, with earnestness: 'I will be brief. Know then, madam, that in order to prevent the intercourse between you and Mr. Cleveland from proceeding I obtained his friendship, and became the confidante of his heart's sweetest secret. Thus situated, I suppressed the letters with which I

was entrusted from him to you, and, poisoning his mind, I accounted for your silence by your being employed in other correspondence; nay, I did more; with the malice of a fiend, I boasted of ——; nay, do not stop me; I have more to tell.'

Mrs. Felix Lorraine, with compressed lips and looks of horrible earnestness, gazed in silence.

'The result of all this you know; but the most terrible part is to come; and, by a strange fascination, I fly to confess my crimes at your feet, even while the last minutes have witnessed my most heinous one. Oh! madam, I have stood over the bier of the departed; I have mingled my tears with those of the sorrowing widower, his young and tender child was on my knee, and as I kissed his innocent lips, methought it was but my duty to the departed to save the father from his mother's rival ——' He stopped.

'Yes, yes, yes,' said Mrs. Felix Lorraine, in a low whisper.

'It was then, even then, in the hour of his desolation, that I mentioned your name, that it might the more disgust him; and while he wept over his virtuous and sainted wife, I dwelt on the vices of his rejected mistress,'

Mrs. Lorraine clasped her hands and moved restlessly on her seat.

'Nay! do not stop me; let me tell all. "Cleveland," said I, "if ever you become the husband of Mrs. Felix Lorraine, remember my last words: it will be well for you if your frame be like that of Mithridates of Pontus, and proof against——poison."'

'And did you say this?' shrieked the woman.

'Even these were my words.'

'Then may all evil blast you!' She threw herself on the sofa; her voice was choked with the convulsions of her passion, and she writhed in fearful agony.

Vivian Grey, lounging in an arm-chair in the easiest of postures, and with a face brilliant with smiles, watched his victim with the eye of a Mephistopheles.

She slowly recovered, and, with a broken voice, poured forth her sacred absolution to the relieved penitent.

'You wonder I do not stab you; hah! hah! hah! there is no need for that! the good powers be praised that you refused the draught I once proffered. Know, wretch, that your race is run. Within five minutes you will breathe a beggar and an outcast. Your golden dreams are over, your cunning plans are circumvented, your ambitious hopes are crushed for ever, you are blighted in the very spring of your life. Oh, may you never die! May you wander for ever, the butt of the world's malice; and may the slow moving finger of scorn point where'er you go at the ruined Charlatan!'

'Hah! hah! is it so? Think you that Vivian Grey would fall by a woman's wile? Think you that Vivian Grey could be crushed by such a worthless thing as you? Know, then, that your political intrigues have been as little concealed from me as your personal ones; I have been acquainted with all. The Marquess has himself seen the minister, and is more firmly established in his pride of place than ever. I have myself seen our colleagues, whom you tampered with, and their hearts are still true, and their purpose still fixed. All, all prospers; and ere five days are passed "the charlatan" will be a Senator.'

The shifting expression of Mrs. Lorraine's countenance, while Vivian was speaking, would have baffled the most cunning painter. Her complexion was capricious as the chameleon's, and her countenance was so convulsed that her features seemed of all shapes and sizes. One large vein protruded nearly a quarter of an inch from her forehead, and the dank light which gleamed in her tearful eye was like an unwholesome meteor quivering in a marsh. When he ended she sprang from the sofa, and, looking up and extending her arms with unmeaning wildness, she gave one loud shriek and dropped like a bird shot on the wing; she had burst a blood-vessel.

Vivian raised her on the sofa and paid her every possible attention. There is always a medical attendant lurking about the mansions of the noble, and to this worthy and the attendant Jacinte Vivian delivered his patient.

Had Vivian Grey left the boudoir a pledged bridegroom his countenance could not have been more triumphant; but he was labouring under unnatural excitement; for it is singular that when, as he left the house, the porter told him that Mr. Cleveland was with his Lord, Vivian had no idea at the moment what individual bore that name. The fresh air of the street revived him, and somewhat cooled the bubbling of his blood. It was then that the man's information struck upon his senses.

'So, poor Cleveland!' thought Vivian; 'then he knows all!' His own misery he had not yet thought of; but when Cleveland occurred to him, with his ambition once more baulked, his high hopes once more blasted, and his honourable soul once more deceived; when he thought of his fair wife, and his

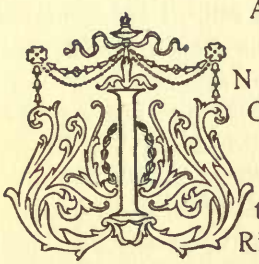
infant children, and his ruined prospects, a sickness came over his heart, he grew dizzy, and fell.

'And the gentleman's ill, I think,' said an honest Irishman; and, in the fulness of his charity, he placed Vivian on a door-step.

'So it seems,' said a genteel passenger in black; and he snatched, with great *sang froid*, Vivian's watch. 'Stop thief!' hallooed the Hibernian. Paddy was tripped up. There was a row, in the midst of which Vivian Grey crawled to an hotel.

CHAPTER V.

A Fatal Duel.



N HALF an hour Vivian was at Mr. Cleveland's door.

'My master is at the Marquess of Carabas', sir; he will not return, but is going immediately to Richmond, where Mrs. Cleveland is staying.'

Vivian immediately wrote to Mr. Cleveland. 'If your master has left the Marquess', let this be forwarded to him at Richmond immediately.'

'Cleveland!

'You know all. It would be mockery were I to say that at this moment I am not thinking of myself. I am a ruined man in body and in mind. But my own misery is nothing; I can die, I can go mad, and who will be harmed? But you! I had wished that we should never meet again; but my hand refuses to trace the thoughts with which my heart is full, and I am under the sad necessity of requesting you to see me once more. We have been betrayed, and by a woman; but there has been revenge. Oh, what revenge!

Vivian Grey.'

When Vivian left Mr. Cleveland's he actually did not know what to do with himself. Home, at present, he could not face, and so he continued to wander about, quite unconscious of locality. He passed in his progress many of his acquaintance, who, from his distracted air and rapid pace, imagined that he was intent on some important business. At length he found himself in one or the most sequestered parts of Kensington Gardens. It was a cold, frosty day, and as Vivian flung himself upon one of the summer seats the snow drifted from off the frozen board; but Vivian's brow was as burning hot as if he had been an inhabitant of Sirius. Throwing his arms on a small garden table he buried his face in his hands and wept as men can but once weep in this world.

O, thou sublime and most subtle philosopher, who, in thy lamp-lit cell, art speculating upon the passions which thou hast never felt! O, thou splendid and most admirable poet, who, with cunning words, art painting with a smile a tale of woe! tell me what is Grief, and solve me the mystery of Sorrow.

Not for himself, for after the first pang he would have whistled off his high hopes with the spirit of a Ripperda, not even for Cleveland, for at this moment, it must be confessed, his thoughts were not for his friend, did Vivian Grey's soul struggle as if it were about to leave its fleshy chamber. We said he wept as men can weep but once in this world, and yet it would have been impossible for him to have defined what, at that fearful moment, was the cause of his heart's sorrow. Incidents of childhood of the most trivial nature, and until this moment forgotten, flashed across his memory; he gazed on the smile of his mother, he listened to the sweet tones of his father's

voice, and his hand clenched, with still more agonised grasp, his rude resting-place, and the scalding tears dashed down his cheek in still more ardent torrents. He had no distinct remembrance of what had so lately happened; but characters flitted before him as in a theatre, in a dream, dim and shadowy, yet full of mysterious and undefinable interest; and then there came a horrible idea across his mind that his glittering youth was gone and wasted; and then there was a dark whisper of treachery, and dissimulation, and dishonour; and then he sobbed as if his very heart were cracking. All his boasted philosophy vanished; his artificial feelings fled him. Insulted Nature reasserted her long-spurned authority, and the once proud Vivian Grey felt too humble even to curse himself. Gradually his sobs became less convulsed and his brow more cool; and, calm from very exhaustion, he sat for upwards of an hour motionless.

At this moment there issued, with their attendant, from an adjoining shrubbery, two beautiful children. They were so exceedingly lovely that the passenger would have stopped to gaze upon them. The eldest, who yet was very young, was leading his sister hand in hand with slow and graceful steps, mimicking the courtesy of men. But when his eye caught Vivian's the boy uttered a loud cry of exultation, and rushed, with the eagerness of infantile affection, to his gentle and favourite playmate. They were the young Clevelands. With what miraculous quickness will man shake off the outward semblance of grief when his sorrow is a secret! The mighty merchant, who knows that in four-and-twenty hours the world must be astounded by his inselvency, will walk in the front of his confident creditor as if he were the lord of a

thousand argosies; the meditating suicide will smile on the arm of a companion as if to breathe in this sunny world were the most ravishing and rapturous bliss. We cling to our stations in our fellow-creatures' minds and memories; we know too well the frail tenure on which we are in this world great and considered personages. Experience makes us shrink from the specious sneer of sympathy; and when we are ourselves falling, bitter Memory whispers that we have ourselves been neglectful.

And so it was that even unto these infants Vivian Grey dared not appear other than a gay and easy-hearted man; and in a moment he was dancing them on his knee, and playing with their curls, and joining in their pretty prattle, and pressing their small and fragrant lips.

It was night when he paced down——. He passed his club; that club to become a member of which had once been the object of his high ambition, and to gain which privilege had cost such hours of canvassing, such interference of noble friends, and the incurring of favours from so many people, 'which never could be forgotten!'

A desperate feeling actuated him, and he entered the Club-house. He walked into the great saloon and met some fifty 'most particular friends,' all of whom asked him 'how the Marquess did,' or 'have you seen Cleveland?' and a thousand other as comfortable queries. At length, to avoid these disagreeable rencontres, and indeed to rest himself, he went to a smaller and more private room. As he opened the door his eyes lighted upon Cleveland.

He was standing with his back to the fire. There were only two other persons in the room; one was

a friend of Cleveland's, and the other an acquaintance of Vivian's. The latter was writing at the table.

When Vivian saw Cleveland he would have retired, but he was bid to 'come in' in a voice of thunder.

As he entered he instantly perceived that Cleveland was under the influence of wine. When in this situation, unlike other men, Mr. Cleveland's conduct was not distinguished by any of the little improprieties of behaviour by which a man is always known by his friends 'to be very drunk.' He neither reeled, nor hiccuped, nor grew maudlin. The effect of drinking upon him was only to increase the intensity of the sensation by which his mind was at the moment influenced. He did not even lose the consciousness of identity of persons. At this moment it was clear to Vivian that Cleveland was under the influence of the extremest passion; his eyes rolled widely, and seemed fixed only upon vacancy. As Vivian was no friend to scenes before strangers he bowed to the two gentlemen and saluted Cleveland with his wonted cordiality; but his proffered hand was rudely repelled.

'Away!' exclaimed Cleveland, in a furious tone; 'I have no friendship for traitors.'

The two gentlemen stared, and the pen of the writer stopped.

'Cleveland!' said Vivian, in an earnest whisper, as he came up close to him; 'for God's sake contain yourself. I have written you a letter which explains all; but ——'

'Out! out upon you. Out upon your honied words and your soft phrases! I have been their dupe too long;' and he struck Vivian.

'Sir John Poynings!' said Vivian, with a quivering lip, turning to the gentleman who was writing at the table, 'we were school-fellows; circumstances have prevented us from meeting often in after-life; but I now ask you, with the frankness of an old acquaintance, to do me the sad service of accompanying me in this quarrel, a quarrel which I call Heaven to witness is not of my seeking.'

The Baronet, who was in the Guards, and, although a great dandy, quite a man of business in these matters, immediately rose from his seat and led Vivian to a corner of the room. After some whispering he turned round to Mr. Cleveland, and bowed to him with a very significant look. It was evident that Cleveland comprehended his meaning, for, though he was silent, he immediately pointed to the other gentleman, his friend, Mr. Castleton.

'Mr. Castleton,' said Sir John, giving his card, 'Mr. Grey will accompany me to my rooms in Pall Mall; it is now ten o'clock; we shall wait two hours, in which time I hope to hear from you. I leave time, and place, and terms to yourself. I only wish it to be understood that it is the particular desire of my principal that the meeting should be as speedy as possible.'

About eleven o'clock the communication from Mr. Castleton arrived. It was quite evident that Cleveland was sobered, for in one instance Vivian observed that the style was corrected by his own hand. The hour was eight the next morning, at —— Common, about six miles from town.

Poynings wrote to a professional friend to be on the ground at half-past seven, and then he and Vivian retired.

Did you ever fight a duel? No? nor send a challenge either? Well! you are fresh, indeed! 'Tis an awkward business, after all, even for the boldest. After an immense deal of negotiation, and giving your opponent every opportunity of coming to an honourable understanding, the fatal letter is at length signed, sealed, and sent. You pass your mornings at your second's apartments, pacing his drawing-room with a quivering lip and uncertain step. At length he enters with an answer; and while he reads you endeavour to look easy, with a countenance merry with the most melancholy smile. You have no appetite for dinner, but you are too brave not to appear at table; and you are called out after the second glass by the arrival of your solicitor, who comes to alter your will. You pass a restless night, and rise in the morning as bilious as a Bengal general. Urged by impending fate, you make a desperate effort to accommodate matters; but in the contest between your pride and your terror you at the same time prove that you are a coward and fail in the negotiation. You both fire and miss, and then the seconds interfere, and then you shake hands: everything being arranged in the most honourable manner and to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. The next day you are seen pacing Bond Street with an erect front and a flashing eye, with an air at once dandyish and heroical, a mixture at the same time of Brummel and the Duke of Wellington.

It was a fine February morning. Sir John drove Vivian to the ground in his cabriolet.

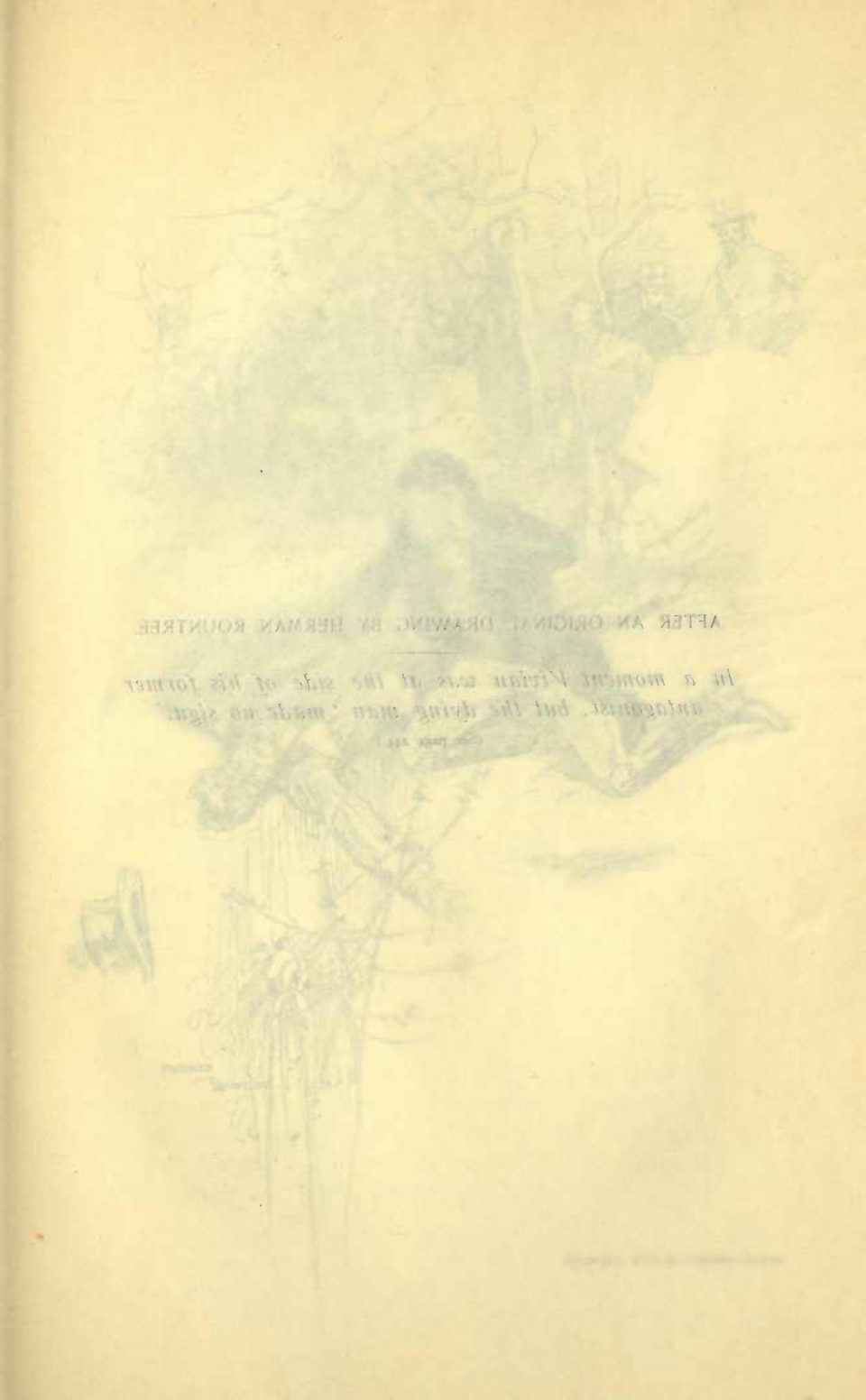
'Nothing like a cab, Grey, for the business you are going on: you glide along the six miles in such style that it actually makes you quite courageous. I

remember once going down, on a similar purpose, in a post and pair, and 'pon my soul, when I came to the ground, my hand shook so that I could scarcely draw. But I was green then. Now, when I go in my cab, with Philidor with his sixteen-mile-an-hour paces, egad! I wing my man in a trice; and take all the parties home to Pall Mall, to celebrate the event with a grilled bone, Havannahs, and Regent's punch. Ah! there! that is Cleveland that we have just passed, going to the ground in a chariot: he is a dead man, or my name is not Poynings.'

'Come, Sir John; no fear of Cleveland's dying,' said Vivian, with a smile.

'What? You mean to fire in the air, and all that sort of thing? Sentimental, but slip-slop!'

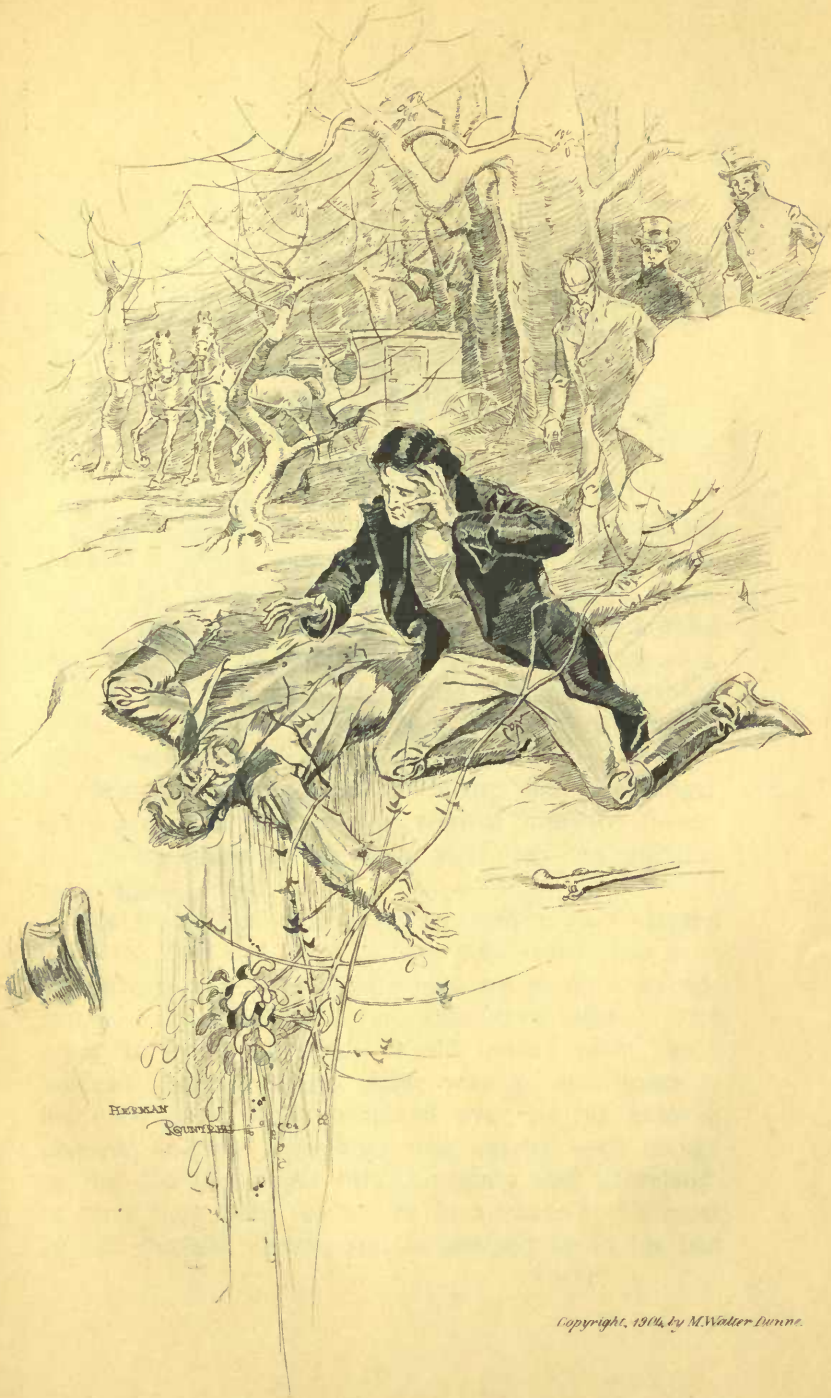
The ground is measured, all is arranged. Cleveland, a splendid shot, fired first. He grazed Vivian's elbow. Vivian fired in the air. The seconds interfered. Cleveland was implacable, and, 'in the most irregular manner,' as Sir John declared, insisted upon another shot. To the astonishment of all, he fired quite wild. Vivian shot at random, and his bullet pierced Cleveland's heart. Cleveland sprang nearly two yards from the ground and then fell upon his back. In a moment Vivian was at the side of his fallen antagonist, but the dying man 'made no sign;' he stared wildly, and then closed his eyes for ever!



AFTER AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY HERMAN ROUNTREE.

In a moment Vivian was at the side of his former antagonist, but the dying man 'made no sign.'

(See page 244.)



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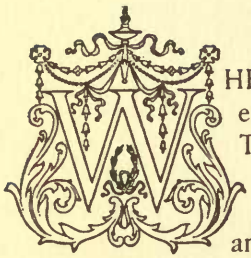
CHAPTER VI.

Remorse.



HEN Vivian Grey remembered his existence he found himself in bed. The curtains of his couch were closed; but as he stared around him they were softly withdrawn, and a face that recalled everything to his recollection gazed upon him with a look of affectionate anxiety.

'My father!' exclaimed Vivian; but the finger pressed on the parental lip warned him to silence. His father knelt by his side, and then the curtains were again closed.

Six weeks, unconsciously to Vivian, had elapsed since the fatal day, and he was now recovering from the effects of a fever from which his medical attendants had supposed he never could have rallied. And what had been the past? It did indeed seem like a hot and feverish dream. Here was he once more in his own quiet room, watched over by his beloved parents; and had there then ever existed such beings as the Marquess, and Mrs. Lorraine, and Cleveland, or were they only the actors in a vision? 'It must be so,' thought Vivian; and he jumped up in his bed

and stared wildly around him. 'And yet it was a horrid dream! Murder, horrible murder! and so real, so palpable! I muse upon their voices as upon familiar sounds, and I recall all the events, not as the shadowy incidents of sleep, that mysterious existence in which the experience of a century seems caught in the breathing of a second, but as the natural and material consequences of time and stirring life. O, no! it is too true!' shrieked the wretched sufferer, as his eye glanced upon a despatch-box which was on the table, and which had been given to him by Lord Carabas; 'It is true! it is true! Murder! murder!' He foamed at the mouth, and sunk exhausted on his pillow.

But the human mind can master many sorrows, and, after a desperate relapse and another miraculous rally, Vivian Grey rose from his bed.

'My father, I fear that I shall live!'

'Hope, rather, my beloved.'

'Oh! why should I hope?' and the sufferer's head sank upon his breast.

'Do not give way, my son; all will yet be well, and we shall all yet be happy,' said the father, with streaming eyes.

'Happy! oh, not in this world, my father!'

'Vivian, my dearest, your mother visited you this morning, but you were asleep. She was quite happy to find you slumbering so calmly.'

'And yet my dreams were not the dreams of joy. O, my mother! you were wont to smile upon me; alas! you smiled upon your sorrow.'

'Vivian, my beloved! you must indeed restrain your feelings. At your age life cannot be the lost game you think it. A little repose, and I shall yet

see my boy the honour to society which he deserves to be.'

'Alas! my father, you know not what I feel. The springiness of my mind has gone. O man, what a vain fool thou art! Nature has been too bountiful to thee. She has given thee the best of friends, and thou valuest not the gift of exceeding price until the griefs are past even friendship's cure. O, my father! why did I leave thee?' and he seized Mr. Grey's hand with convulsive grasp.

Time flew on, even in this house of sorrow. 'My boy,' said Mr. Grey to his son one day, 'your mother and I have been consulting together about you; and we think, now that you have somewhat recovered your strength, it may be well for you to leave England for a short time. The novelty of travel will relieve your mind without too much exciting it; and if you can manage by the autumn to settle down anywhere within a thousand miles of England, why we will come and join you, and you know that will be very pleasant. What say you to this little plan?'

In a few weeks after this proposition had been made Vivian Grey was in Germany. He wandered for some months in that beautiful land of rivers, among which flows the Rhine, matchless in its loveliness; and at length the pilgrim shook the dust off his feet at Heidelberg, in which city Vivian proposed taking up his residence. It is, in truth, a place of surpassing loveliness, where all the romantic wildness of German scenery is blended with the soft beauty of the Italian. An immense plain, which, in its extent and luxuriance, reminds you of the fertile tracts of Lombardy, is bordered on one side by the Bergstrasse Mountains, and on the other by the range of

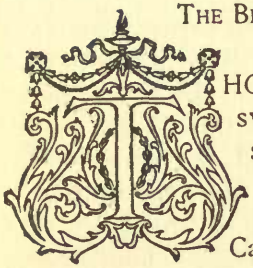
the Vosges. Situate on the river Neckar, in a ravine of the Bergstrasse, amid mountains covered with vines, is Heidelberg; its ruined castle backing the city, and still frowning from one of the most commanding heights. In the middle of the broad plain may be distinguished the shining spires of Mannheim, Worms, and Frankenthal; and pouring its rich stream through this luxuriant land, the beautiful and abounding Rhine receives the tribute of the Neckar. The range of the Vosges forms the extreme distance.

To the little world of the little city of which he was now an inhabitant Vivian Grey did not appear a broken-hearted man. He lived neither as a recluse nor a misanthrope. He became extremely addicted to field sports, especially to hunting the wild boar; for he feared nothing so much as thought, and dreaded nothing so much as the solitude of his own chamber. He was an early riser to escape from hideous dreams; and at break of dawn he wandered among the wild passes of the Bergstrasse; or, climbing a lofty ridge, was a watcher for the rising sun; and in the evening he sailed upon the star-lit Neckar.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

THE BENEFITS OF EXPERIENCE.



HOU rapid Aar! thy waves are swollen by the snows of a thousand hills; but for whom are thy leaping waters fed? Is it for the Rhine?

Calmly, O placid Neckar! does thy blue stream glide through thy vine-clad vales; but calmer seems thy course when it touches the rushing Rhine!

How fragrant are the banks which are cooled by thy dark-green waters, thou tranquil Maine! but is not the perfume sweeter of the gardens of the Rhine?

Thou impetuous Nah! I lingered by thine islands of nightingales, and I asked thy rushing waters why they disturbed the music of thy groves? They told me they were hastening to the Rhine!

Red Moselle! fierce is the swell of thy spreading course; but why do thy broad waters blush when they meet the Rhine?

Thou delicate Meuse! how clear is the current of thy limpid wave; as the wife yields to the husband do thy pure waters yield to the Rhine!

And thou, triumphant and imperial River, flushed with the tribute of these vassal streams! thou art thyself a tributary, and hastenest even in the pride of conquest to confess thine own vassalage! But no superior stream exults in the homage of thy servile waters: the Ocean, the eternal Ocean, alone comes forward to receive thy kiss! not as a conqueror, but as a parent, he welcomes with proud joy his gifted child, the offspring of his honour; thy duty, his delight; thy tribute, thine own glory!

Once more upon thy banks, most beauteous Rhine! In the spring-time of my youth I gazed on thee, and deemed thee matchless. Thy vine-enamoured mountains, thy spreading waters, thy traditionary crags, thy shining cities, the sparkling villages of thy winding shores, thy antique convents, thy grey and silent castles, the purple glories of thy radiant grape, the vivid tints of thy teeming flowers, the fragrance of thy sky, the melody of thy birds, whose carols tell the pleasures of their sunny woods; are they less lovely now, less beautiful, less sweet?

The keen emotions of our youth are often the occasion of our estimating too ardently; but the first impression of beauty, though often overcharged, is seldom supplanted: and as the first great author which he reads is reverenced by the boy as the most immortal, and the first beautiful woman that he meets is sanctified by him as the most adorable; so the impressions created upon us by those scenes of nature which first realise the romance of our reveries never escape from our minds, and are ever consecrated in our memories; and thus some great spirits, after having played their part on the theatre of the world, have retired from the blaze of courts and cities to

the sweet seclusion of some spot with which they have accidentally met in the earliest years of their career.

But we are to speak of one who had retired from the world before his time.

Upwards of a year had elapsed since Vivian Grey left England. The mode of life which he pursued at Heidelberg for many months has already been mentioned. He felt himself a broken-hearted man, and looked for death, whose delay was no blessing; but the feelings of youth which had misled him in his burning hours of joy equally deceived him in his days of sorrow. He lived; and in the course of time found each day that life was less burdensome. The truth is, that if it be the lot of man to suffer, it is also his fortune to forget. Oblivion and Sorrow share our being, as Darkness and Light divide the course of time. It is not in human nature to endure extremities, and sorrows soon destroy either us or themselves. Perhaps the fate of Niobe is no fable, but a type of the callousness of our nature. There is a time in human suffering when succeeding sorrows are but like snow falling on an iceberg. It is indeed horrible to think that our peace of mind should arise, not from a retrospection of the past, but from a forgetfulness of it; but, though this peace be produced at the best by a mental opiate, it is not valueless; and Oblivion, after all, is a just judge. As we retain but a faint remembrance of our felicity, it is but fair that the smartest stroke of sorrow should, if bitter, at least be brief. But in feeling that he might yet again mingle in the world, Vivian Grey also felt that he must meet mankind with different feelings, and view their pursuits with a different interest. He woke

from his secret sorrow in as changed a state of being as the water nymph from her first embrace; and he woke with a new possession, not only as miraculous as Undine's soul, but gained at as great a price, and leading to as bitter results. The nymph woke to new pleasures and to new sorrows; and, innocent as an infant, she deemed mankind a god, and the world a paradise. Vivian Grey discovered that this deity was but an idol of brass, and this garden of Eden but a savage waste; for, if the river nymph had gained a soul, he had gained Experience.

Experience, mysterious spirit! whose result is felt by all, whose nature is described by none. The father warns the son of thy approach, and sometimes looks to thee as his offspring's cure and his own consolation. We hear of thee in the nursery, we hear of thee in the world, we hear of thee in books; but who has recognised thee until he was thy subject, and who has discovered the object of so much fame until he has kissed thy chain? To gain thee is the work of all and the curse of all; thou art at the same time necessary to our happiness and destructive of our felicity; thou art the saviour of all things and the destroyer of all things; our best friend and our bitterest enemy; for thou teachest us truth, and that truth is, despair. Ye youth of England, would that ye could read this riddle!

To wake from your bright hopes, and feel that all is vanity, to be roused from your crafty plans and know that all is worthless, is a bitter, but your sure, destiny. Escape is impossible; for despair is the price of conviction. How many centuries have fled since Solomon, in his cedar palaces, sung the vanity of man! Though his harp was golden and his throne

of ivory, his feelings were not less keen, and his conviction not less complete. How many sages of all nations have, since the monarch of Jerusalem, echoed his sad philosophy! yet the vain bubble still glitters and still allures, and must for ever.

The genealogy of Experience is brief; for Experience is the child of Thought, and Thought is the child of Action. We cannot learn men from books, nor can we form, from written descriptions, a more accurate idea of the movements of the human heart than we can of the movements of nature. A man may read all his life, and form no conception of the rush of a mountain torrent, or the waving of a forest of pines in a storm; and a man may study in his closet the heart of his fellow-creatures for ever, and have no idea of the power of ambition, or the strength of revenge.

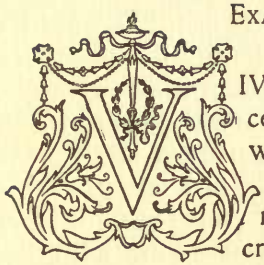
It is when we have acted ourselves, and have seen others acting; it is when we have laboured ourselves under the influence of our passions, and have seen others labouring; it is when our great hopes have been attained or have been baulked; it is when, after having had the human heart revealed to us, we have the first opportunity to think; it is then that the whole truth lights upon us; it is then that we ask of ourselves whether it be wise to endure such anxiety of mind, such agitation of spirit, such harrowing of the soul, to gain what may cease to interest to-morrow, or for which, at the best, a few years of enjoyment can alone be afforded; it is then that we waken to the hollowness of all human things; it is then that the sayings of sages and the warnings of prophets are explained and understood; it is then that we gain Experience.

Vivian Grey was now about to join, for the second time, the great and agitated crowd of beings who are all intent in the search after that undiscoverable talisman, Happiness. That he entertained any hope of being the successful inquirer is not to be imagined. He considered that the happiest moment in human life is exactly the sensation of a sailor who has escaped a shipwreck, and that the mere belief that his wishes are to be indulged is the greatest bliss enjoyed by man.

How far his belief was correct, how he prospered in this his second venture on the great ocean of life, it is our business to relate. There were moments when he wished himself neither experienced nor a philosopher; moments when he looked back to the lost paradise of his innocent boyhood, those glorious hours when the unruffled river of his Life mirrored the cloudless heaven of his Hope!

CHAPTER II.

Exalted Company.



IVIAN pulled up his horse as he ascended through the fine beech wood which leads immediately to the city of Frankfort from the Darmstadt road. The crowd seemed to increase every moment, but as they were all hastening the same way, his progress was not much impeded. It was Frankfort fair; and all countenances were expressive of that excitement which we always experience at great meetings of our fellow-creatures; whether the assemblies be for slaughter, pleasure, or profit, and whether or not we ourselves join in the banquet, the battle, or the fair. At the top of the hill is an old Roman tower, and from this point the flourishing city of Frankfort, with its picturesque Cathedral, its numerous villas, and beautiful gardens in the middle of the fertile valley of the Maine, burst upon Vivian's sight. On crossing the bridge over the river, the crowd became almost impassable, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Vivian steered his way through the old narrow winding streets, full of tall ancient houses, with heavy casements and notched gable ends. These structures did

not, however, at the present moment, greet the traveller with their usual sombre and antique appearance: their outside walls were, in most instances, covered with pieces of broad cloth of the most showy colours, red, blue, and yellow predominating. These standards of trade were not merely used for the purpose of exhibiting the quality of the articles sold in the interior, but also of informing the curious traveller the name and nation of their adventurous owners. Inscriptions in German, French, Russian, English, Italian, and even Hebrew, appeared in striking characters on each woollen specimen; and, as if these were not sufficient to attract the attention of the passenger, an active apprentice, or assistant, commented in eloquent terms on the peculiar fairness and honesty of his master. The public squares and other open spaces, and indeed every spot which was secure from the hurrying wheels of the heavy old-fashioned coaches of the Frankfort aristocracy and the spirited pawings of their sleek and long-tailed coach-horses, were covered with large and showy booths, which groaned under the accumulated treasures of all countries. French silks and French clocks rivalled Manchester cottons and Sheffield cutlery, and assisted to attract or entrap the gazer, in company with Venetian chains, Neapolitan coral, and Vienna pipeheads: here was the booth of a great bookseller, who looked to the approaching Leipsic fair for some consolation for his slow sale and the bad taste of the people of Frankfort; and there was a dealer in Bologna sausages, who felt quite convinced that in some things the taste of the Frankfort public was by no means to be lightly spoken of. All was bustle, bargaining, and business: there were quarrels and conversation in all languages; and

Vivian Grey, although he had no chance either of winning or losing money, was amused.

At last Vivian gained the High Street; and here, though the crowd was not less, the space was greater; and so in time he arrived at the grand hotel of 'the Roman Emperor,' where he stopped. It was a long time before he could be informed whether Baron Julius von Konigstein at present honoured that respectable establishment with his presence; for, although Vivian did sometimes succeed in obtaining an audience of a hurrying waiter, that personage, when in a hurry, has a peculiar habit of never attending to a question which a traveller addresses to him. In this dilemma Vivian was saluted by a stately-looking personage above the common height. He was dressed in a very splendid uniform of green and gold, covered with embroidery, and glittering with frogs. He wore a cocked hat adorned with a flowing parti-coloured plume, and from his broad golden belt was suspended a weapon of singular shape and costly workmanship. This personage was as stiff and stately as he was magnificent. His eyes were studiously preserved from the profanation of meeting the ground, and his well-supported neck seldom condescended to move from its perpendicular position. His coat was buttoned to the chin and over the breast, with the exception of one small aperture, which was elegantly filled up by a delicate white cambric handkerchief, very redolent of rich perfumes. This gorgeous gentleman, who might have been mistaken for an elector of the German Empire, had the German Empire been in existence, or the governor of the city at the least, turned out to be the chasseur of the Baron von Konigstein; and with his courtly assistance Vivian soon

found himself ascending the staircase of the Roman Emperor.

Vivian was ushered into an apartment in which he found three or four individuals at breakfast. A middle-aged man of distinguished appearance, in a splendid chamber robe, sprung up from a many-cushioned easy-chair, and seized his hand as he was announced.

'My dear Mr. Grey! I have left notes for you at the principal hotels. And how is Eugene? Wild blood for a student, but an excellent heart, and you have been so kind to him! He feels under such particular obligations to you. Will you breakfast? Ah! I see you smile at my supposing a horseman unbreakfasted. And have you ridden here from Heidelberg this morning? Impossible! Only from Darmstadt! I thought so! You were at the opera then last night. And how is the little Signora? We are to gain her, though! trust the good people of Frankfort for that! Pray be seated, but really I am forgetting the commonest rules of breeding. Next to the pleasure of having friends is that of introducing them to each other. Prince, you will have great pleasure in being introduced to my friend, Mr. Grey: Mr. Grey! Prince Salvinski! my particular friend, Prince Salvinski. The Count von Altenburgh! Mr. Grey! my very particular friend, the Count von Altenburgh. And the Chevalier de Bœffleurs! Mr. Grey! my most particular friend, the Chevalier de Bœffleurs.'

Baron Julius von Konigstein was minister to the Diet of Frankfort from a first-rate German Power. In person he was short, but delicately formed; his head a little bald, but as he was only five-and-thirty, this could scarcely be from age; and his remaining hair,

black, glossy, and curling, proved that their companion ringlets had not been long lost. His features were small, but not otherwise remarkable, except a pair of liquid black eyes, of great size, which would have hardly become a Stoic, and which gleamed with great meaning and perpetual animation.

'I understand, Mr. Grey, that you are a regular philosopher. Pray who is the favourite master? Kant or Fichte? or is there any other new star who has discovered the origin of our essence, and proved the non-necessity of eating? Count, let me help you to a little more of these *saucisses aux choux*. I am afraid, from Eugene's account, that you are almost past redemption; and I am sorry to say that, although I am very desirous of being your physician and effecting your cure, Frankfort will supply me with very few means to work your recovery. If you could but get me an appointment once again to your delightful London, I might indeed produce some effect; or were I even at Berlin, or at your delicious Vienna, Count Altenburgh! (the Count bowed); or at that Paradise of women, Warsaw, Prince Salvinski!! (the Prince bowed); or at Paris, Chevalier!!! (the Chevalier bowed); why, then, indeed, you should have some difficulty in finding an excuse for being in low spirits with Julius von Konigstein! But Frankfort, eh! de Bœffleurs?'

'Oh! Frankfort!' sighed the French Chevalier, who was also attached to a mission in this very city, and who was thinking of his own gay Boulevards and his brilliant Tuileries.

'We are mere citizens here!' continued the Baron, taking a long pinch of snuff, 'mere citizens! Do you snuff?' and here he extended to Vivian a

gold box, covered with the portrait of a crowned head, surrounded with diamonds. 'A present from the King of Sardinia, when I negotiated the marriage of the Duke of —— and his niece, and settled the long-agitated controversy about the right of anchovy fishing on the left shore of the Mediterranean.

'But the women,' continued the Baron, 'the women; that is a different thing. There is some amusement among the little bourgeoises, who are glad enough to get rid of their commercial beaus; whose small talk, after a waltz, is about bills of exchange, mixed up with a little patriotism about their free city, and some chatter about what they call "the fine arts;" their awful collections of "the Dutch school:" school forsooth! a cabbage, by Gerard Dow! and a candlestick, by Mieris! And now will you take a basin of soup, and warm yourself, while his Highness continues his account of being frozen to death this spring at the top of Mont-Blanc: how was it, Prince?'

'Your Highness has been a great traveller?' said Vivian.

'I have seen a little of most countries. These things are interesting enough when we are young; but when we get a little more advanced in life, the novelty wears off, and the excitement ceases. I have been in all quarters of the globe. In Europe I have seen everything except the miracles of Prince Hohenlohe. In Asia, everything except the ruins of Babylon. In Africa, I have seen everything but Timbuctoo; and, in America, everything except Croker's Mountains.'

Next to eating, music is the business in which an Austrian is most interested, and Count Von Altenburgh, having had the misfortune of destroying, for

the present, one great source of his enjoyment, became now very anxious to know what chance there existed of his receiving some consolation from the other. Pushing his plate briskly from him he demanded with an anxious air, 'Can any gentleman inform me what chance there is of the Signora coming?'

'No news to-day,' said the Baron, with a mournful look; 'I am almost in despair. What do you think of the last notes that have been interchanged?'

'Very little chance,' said the Chevalier de Bœffleurs, shaking his head. 'Really these burghers, with all their affected enthusiasm, have managed the business exceedingly bad. No opera can possibly succeed that is not conducted by a committee of noblemen.'

'Certainly!' said the Baron; 'we are sure then to have the best singers, and be in the Gazette the same season.'

'Which is much better, I think, Von Konigstein, than paying our bills and receiving no pleasure.'

'But,' continued the Baron, 'these clumsy burghers, with their affected enthusiasm, as you well observe; who could have contemplated such novices in diplomacy! Whatever may be the issue, I can at least lay my head upon my pillow and feel that I have done my duty. Did not I, de Bœffleurs, first place the negotiation on a basis of acknowledged feasibility and mutual benefit? Who drew the protocol, I should like to know? Who baffled the intrigues of the English Minister, the Lord Amelius Fitzfudge Boroughby? Who sat up one whole night with the Signora's friend, the Russian Envoy, Baron Squallonoff, and who was it that first arranged about the extra chariot?' and here the representative of a first-rate

German Power looked very much like a resigned patriot, who feels that he deserves a ribbon.

'No doubt of it, my dear Von Konigstein,' echoed the French Chargé d'Affaires, 'and I think, whatever may be the result, that I, too, may look back to this negotiation with no ungratified feelings. Had the arrangement been left as I had wished, merely to the Ministers of the Great Powers, I am confident that the Signora would have been singing this night in our Opera House.'

'What is the grand point of difference at present?' asked the Austrian.

'A terrific one,' said the Baron; 'the lady demanded twenty covers, two tables, two carriages, one of which I arranged should be a chariot; that at least the town owes to me; and, what else? merely a town mansion and establishment. Exerting myself day and night, these terms were at length agreed to by the municipality, and the lady was to ride over from Darmstadt to sign and seal. In the course of her ride she took a cursed fancy to the country villa of a great Jew banker, and since that moment the arrangement has gone off. We have offered her everything; the commandant's country castle; his lady's country farm; the villa of the director of the opera; the retreat of our present prima donna; all in vain. We have even hinted at a temporary repose in a neighbouring royal residence; but all useless. The banker and the Signora are equally intractable, and Frankfort is in despair.'

'She ought to have signed and sealed at Darmstadt,' said the Count, very indignantly.

'To be sure! they should have closed upon her caprice, and taken her when she was in the fancy.'

'Talking of opera girls,' commenced the Polish Prince, 'I remember the Countess Katszinski ——'

'Your Highness has nothing upon your plate,' quickly retorted the Baron, who was in no humour for a story.

'Nothing more, I thank you,' continued the Prince: 'as I was saying, I remember the Countess Katszinski ——' but just at this moment the door opened, and Ernstorff entered and handed a despatch to the Baron, recommending it to his Excellency's particular attention.

'Business, I suppose,' said the Plenipotentiary; 'it may wait till to-morrow.'

'From M. Clarionet, your Excellency.'

'From M. Clarionet!' eagerly exclaimed the Baron, and tore open the epistle. 'Gentlemen! congratulate me, congratulate yourselves, congratulate Frankfort;' and the diplomatist, overcome, leant back in his chair. 'She is ours, Salvinski! she is ours, Von Altenburgh! she is ours, my dear de Bœffleurs! Mr. Grey, you are most fortunate; the Signora has signed and sealed; all is arranged; she sings to-night! What a fine spirited body is this Frankfort municipality! what elevation of soul! what genuine enthusiasm! eh! de Bœffleurs?'

'Most genuine!' exclaimed the Chevalier, who hated German music with all his heart, and was now humming an air from La Dame Blanche.

'But mind, my dear friend, this is a secret, a cabinet secret; the municipality are to have the gratification of announcing the event to the city in a public decree; it is but fair. I feel that I have only to hint to secure your silence.'

At this moment, with a thousand protestations of

secrecy, the party broke up, each hastening to have the credit of first spreading the joyful intelligence through the circles, and of depriving the Frankfort senate of their hard-earned gratification. The Baron, who was in high spirits, ordered the carriage to drive Vivian round the ramparts, where he was to be introduced to some of the most fashionable beauties, previous to the evening triumph.

CHAPTER III.

The Frankfort Fair.

VIVIAN passed a week very agreeably at Frankfort. In the Baron and his friends he found the companions that he had need of; their conversation and pursuits diverted his mind without engaging his feelings, and allowed him no pause to brood. There were moments, indeed, when he found in the Baron a companion neither frivolous nor uninstructive. His Excellency had travelled in most countries, and had profited by his travels. His taste for the fine arts was equalled by his knowledge of them; and his acquaintance with many of the most eminent men of Europe enriched his conversation with a variety of anecdotes, to which his lively talents did ample justice. He seemed fond at times of showing Vivian that he was not a mere artificial man of the world, destitute of all feelings, and thinking only of himself: he recurred with satisfaction to moments of his life when his passions had been in full play; and, while he acknowledged the errors of his youth with candour, he excused them with grace. In short, Vivian and he became what the world calls friends; that is to say,

they were men who had no objection to dine in each other's company, provided the dinner were good; assist each other in any scrape, provided no particular personal responsibility were incurred by the assistant; and live under the same roof, provided each were master of his own time. Vivian and the Baron, indeed, did more than this; they might have been described as particular friends, for his Excellency had persuaded our hero to accompany him for the summer to the Baths of Ems, a celebrated German watering-place, situate in the duchy of Nassau, in the vicinity of the Rhine.

On the morrow they were to commence their journey. The fair of Frankfort, which had now lasted nearly a month, was at its close. A bright sunshiny afternoon was stealing into twilight, when Vivian, escaping from the principal street and the attractions of the Braunfels, or chief shops under the Exchange, directed his steps to some of the more remote and ancient streets. In crossing a little square his attention was excited by a crowd which had assembled round a conjuror, who, from the top of a small cart, which he had converted into a stage, was haranguing, in front of a green curtain, an audience with great fervency, and apparently with great effect; at least Vivian judged so from the loud applauses which constantly burst forth. The men pressed nearer, shouted, and clapped their hands; and the anxious mothers struggled to lift their brats higher in the air that they might early form a due conception of the powers of magic, and learn that the maternal threats which were sometimes extended to them at home were not mere idle boasting. Altogether, the men with their cocked hats, stiff holiday coats, and long pipes; the

women with their glazed gowns of bright fancy patterns, close lace caps, or richly-chased silver head-gear; and the children with their gaping mouths and long heads of hair, offered quaint studies for a German or Flemish painter. Vivian became also one of the audience, and not an uninterested one.

The appearance of the conjuror was peculiar. He was not much more than five feet high, but so slightly formed that he reminded you rather of the boy than the dwarf. The upper part of his face was even delicately moulded; his sparkling black eyes became his round forehead, which was not too much covered by his short glossy black hair; his complexion was clear, but quite olive; his nose was very small and straight, and contrasted singularly with his enormous mouth, the thin bluish lips of which were seldom closed, and consequently did not conceal his large square teeth, which, though very white, were set apart, and were so solid that they looked almost like double teeth. This enormous mouth, which was supported by large jawbones, attracted the attention of the spectator so keenly that it was some time before you observed the prodigious size of the ears, which also adorned this extraordinary countenance. The costume of this being was not less remarkable than his natural appearance. He wore a complete under-dress of pliant leather, which fitted close up to his throat and down to his wrists and ankles, where it was clasped with large fastenings, either of gold or some gilt material. This, with the addition of a species of hussar jacket of green cloth, which was quite unadorned with the exception of its vivid red lining, was the sole covering of the conjuror; who, with a light cap and feather in his hand, was now

haranguing the spectators. The object of his discourse was a panegyric of himself and a satire on all other conjurors. He was the only conjuror, the real one, a worthy descendant of the magicians of old.

'Were I to tell that broad-faced Herr,' continued the conjuror, 'who is now gaping opposite to me, that this rod is the rod of Aaron, mayhap he would call me a liar; yet were I to tell him that he was the son of his father, he would not think it wonderful! And yet, can he prove it? My friends, if I am a liar, the whole world is a liar, and yet any one of you who'll go and proclaim that on the Braunfels will get his skull cracked. Every truth is not to be spoken, and every lie is not to be punished. I have told you that it is better for you to spend your money in seeing my tricks than in swigging schnaps in the chimney corner; and yet, my friends, this may be a lie. I have told you that the profits of this whole night shall be given to some poor and worthy person in this town; and perhaps I shall give them to myself. What then! I shall speak the truth; and you will perhaps crack my skull. Is this a reward for truth? O generation of vipers! My friends, what is truth? who can find it in Frankfort? Suppose I call upon you, Mr. Baker, and sup with you this evening; you will receive me as a neighbourly man should, tell me to make myself at home, and do as I like. Is it not so? I see you smile, as if my visit would make you bring out one of the bottles of your best Asmanshausen!'

Here the crowd laughed out; for we are always glad when there is any talk of another's hospitality being put to the test, although we stand no chance of sharing in the entertainment ourselves. The baker looked foolish, as all men singled out in a crowd do.

'Well, well,' continued the conjuror, 'I have no doubt his wine would be as ready as your tobacco, Mr. Smith; or a wafila from your basket, my honest cake-seller;' and so saying, with a long thin wand the conjuror jerked up the basket of an itinerant and shouting pastry-cook, and immediately began to thrust the contents into his mouth with a rapidity ludicrously miraculous. The laugh now burst out again, but the honest baker joined in it this time with an easy spirit.

'Be not disconcerted, my little custard-monger; if thou art honest, thou shalt prosper. Did I not say that the profits of this night were for the most poor and the most honest? If thy stock in trade were in thy basket, my raspberry-puff, verily thou art not now the richest here; and so, therefore, if thy character be a fair one, that is to say, if thou only cheat five times a-day, and give a tenth of thy cheatery to the poor, thou shalt have the benefit. I ask thee again, what is truth? If I sup with the baker, and he tells me to do what I like with all that is his, and I kiss his wife, he will kick me out; yet to kiss his wife might be my pleasure, if her breath were sweet. I ask thee again, what is truth? Truth, they say, lies in a well; but perhaps this is a lie. How do we know that truth is not in one of these two boxes?' asked the conjuror, placing his cap on his head, and holding one small snuff-box to a tall, savage-looking, one-eyed Bohemian, who, with a comrade, had walked over from the Austrian garrison at Mentz.

'I see but one box,' growled the soldier.

'It is because thou hast only one eye, friend; open the other, and thou shalt see two,' said the conjuror, in a slow, malicious tone, with his neck extended, and his hand with the hateful box outstretched in it.

'Now, by our black Lady of Altoting, I'll soon stop thy prate, chitterling!' bellowed the enraged Bohemian.

'Murder! the protection of the free city against the Emperor of Austria, the King of Bohemia, Hungary, and Lombardy!' and the knave retreated to the very extremity of the stage, and affecting agitating fear, hid himself behind the green curtain, from a side of which his head was alone visible, or rather an immense red tongue, which wagged in all shapes at the unlucky soldier, except when it retired to the interior of his mouth, to enable him to reiterate 'Murder!' and invoke the privileges of the free city of Frankfort.

When the soldier was a little cooled, the conjuror again came forward, and, having moved his small magical table to a corner, and lit two tapers, one of which he placed at each side of the stage, he stripped off his hussar jacket, and began to imitate a monkey; an animal which, by the faint light, in his singular costume, he very much resembled. How amusing were his pranks! He first plundered a rice plantation, and then he cracked cocoa-nuts; then he washed his face and arranged his toilet with his right paw; and finally he ran a race with his own tail, which humorous appendage to his body was very wittily performed for the occasion by a fragment of an old tarred rope. His gambols were so diverting that they even extracted applause from his enemy the one-eyed serjeant; and, emboldened by the acclamations, from monkeys the conjuror began to imitate men. He first drank like a Dutchman, and having reeled round with a thousand oaths, to the manifold amusement of the crowd, he suddenly began to smoke like a Prussian.

Nothing could be more admirable than the look of complacent and pompous stolidity with which he accompanied each puff of his pipe. The applause was continued; and the one-eyed Bohemian serjeant, delighted at the ridicule which was heaped on his military rival, actually threw the mimic some groschen.

'Keep thy pence, friend,' said the conjuror; 'thou wilt soon owe me more; we have not yet closed accounts. My friends, I have drank like a Dutchman; I have smoked like a Prussian; and now I will eat like an Austrian!' and here the immense mouth of the actor seemed distended even a hundred degrees bigger, while with gloating eyes and extended arms he again set to at the half-emptied wafila basket of the unhappy pastry-cook.

'Now, by our black Lady of Altoting, thou art an impudent varlet!' growled the Austrian soldier.

'You are losing your temper again,' retorted the glutton, with his mouth full; 'how difficult you are to please! Well, then, if the Austrians may not be touched, what say you to a Bohemian! a tall one-eyed Bohemian serjeant, with an appetite like a hog and a liver like a lizard?'

'Now, by our black Lady of Altoting, this is too much!' and the soldier sprang at the conjuror.

'Hold him!' cried Vivian Grey; for the mob, frightened at the soldier, gave way.

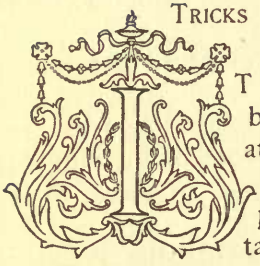
'There is a gentle's voice under a dark cloak!' cried the conjuror; 'but I want no assistance;' and so saying, with a dexterous spring the conjuror leaped over the heads of two or three staring children, and lighted on the nape of the serjeant's gigantic neck; placing his forefingers behind each of the soldier's ears, he threatened to slit them immediately if he

were not quiet. The serjeant's companion, of course, came to his rescue, but Vivian engaged him, and attempted to arrange matters. 'My friends, surely a gay word at a fair is not to meet with military punishment! What is the use of living in the free city of Frankfort, or, indeed, in any other city, if jokes are to be answered with oaths, and a light laugh met with a heavy blow? Avoid bloodshed, if possible, but stand by the conjuror. His business is jibes and jests, and this is the first time that I ever saw Merry Andrew arrested. Come, my good fellows!' said he to the soldiers, 'we had better be off; men so important as you and I should not be spectators of these mummeries.' The Austrians, who understood Vivian's compliment literally, were not sorry to make a dignified retreat; particularly as the mob, encouraged by Vivian's interference, began to show fight. Vivian also took his departure as soon as he could possibly steal off unnoticed; but not before he had been thanked by the conjuror.

'I knew there was gentle blood under that cloak. If you like to see the Mystery of the Crucifixion, with the Resurrection, and real fireworks, it begins at eight o'clock, and you shall be admitted gratis. I knew there was gentle blood under that cloak, and some day or other, when your Highness is in distress, you shall not want the aid of Essper George!'

CHAPTER IV.

Tricks of a Merry Andrew.



T WAS late in the evening when a britzska stopped at the post-house at Coblentz. The passage-boat from Bingen had just arrived; and a portly judge from the Danube, a tall, gaunt Prussian officer, a sketching English artist, two University students, and some cloth-merchants, returning from Frankfort fair, were busily occupied at a long table in the centre of the room, at an ample banquet, in which sourcrout, cherry-soup, and savoury sausages were not wanting. So keen were the appetites of these worthies, that the entrance of the new comers, who seated themselves at a small table in the corner of the room, was scarcely noticed; and for half-an-hour nothing was heard but the sound of crashing jaws and of rattling knives and forks. How singular is the sight of a dozen hungry individuals intent upon their prey! What a noisy silence! A human voice was at length heard. It proceeded from the fat judge; a man at once convivial, dignified, and economical: he had not spoken for two minutes before his character was evident to every person in the room, although he flat-

tered himself that his secret purpose was concealed from all. Tired with the thin Moselle gratuitously allowed to the table, the judge wished to comfort himself with a glass of more generous liquor; aware of the price of a bottle of good Rudesheimer, he was desirous of forming a copartnership with one or two gentlemen in the venture; still more aware of his exalted situation, he felt it did not become him to appear in the eyes of any one as an unsuccessful suppliant.

'This Moselle is very thin,' observed the judge, shaking his head.

'Very fair table-wine, I think,' said the artist, refilling his tumbler, and then proceeding with his sketch, which was a rough likeness, in black chalk, of the worthy magistrate himself.

'Very good wine, I think,' swore the Prussian, taking the bottle. With the officer there was certainly no chance.

The cloth-merchants mixed even this thin Moselle with water, and therefore they could hardly be looked to as boon companions; and the students were alone left. A German student is no flincher at the bottle, although he generally drinks beer. These gentry, however, were no great favourites with the magistrate, who was a loyal man, of regular habits, and no encourager of brawls, duels, and other still more disgraceful outrages; to all which abominations, besides drinking beer and chewing tobacco, the German student is remarkably addicted; but in the present case what was to be done? He offered the nearest a pinch of snuff, as a mode of commencing his acquaintance and cultivating his complacency. The student dug his thumb into the box, and, with the

additional aid of the forefinger sweeping out half its contents, growled out something like thanks, and then drew up in his seat, as if he had too warmly encouraged the impertinent intrusion of a Philistine to whom he had never been introduced.

The cloth-merchant, ceasing from sipping his meek liquor, and taking out of his pocket a letter, from which he tore off the back, carefully commenced collecting with his fore-finger the particles of dispersed snuff in a small pyramid, which, when formed, was dexterously slided into the paper, then folded up and put into his pocket; the prudent merchant contenting himself for the moment with the refreshment which was afforded to his senses by the truant particles which had remained in his nail.

'Waiter, a bottle of Rudesheimer!' bellowed the judge; 'and if any gentleman or gentlemen would like to join me, they may,' he added, in a more subdued tone. No one answered and the bottle was put down. The judge slowly poured out the bright yellow fluid into a tall bell glass, adorned with a beautiful and encircling wreath of vine leaves; he held the glass a moment before the lamp, for his eye to dwell with still greater advantage on the transparent radiancy of the contents; and then deliberately pouring them down his throat, and allowing them to dwell a moment on his palate, he uttered an emphatic 'bah!' and sucking in his breath, leaned back in his chair. The student immediately poured out a glass from the same bottle, and drank it off. The judge gave him a look, and then blessed himself that, though his boon companion was a brute, still he would lessen the expense of the bottle, which nearly amounted to a day's pay; and so he again filled his

glass, but this was merely to secure his fair portion. He saw the student was a rapid drinker; and, although he did not like to hurry his own enjoyment, he thought it most prudent to keep his glass well stored by his side.

'I hope your Lordships have had a pleasant voyage,' exclaimed a man, entering the room rapidly as he spoke; and, deliberately walking up to the table, he pushed between two of the cloth-merchants, who quietly made way; and then placing a small square box before him, immediately opened it, and sweeping aside the dishes and glasses which surrounded him, began to fill their places with cups, balls, rings, and other mysterious-looking matters, which generally accompany a conjuror.

'I hope your Lordships have had a pleasant voyage. I have been thinking of you all the day. (Here the cups were arranged.) Next to myself, I am interested for my friends. (Here the rice was sprinkled.) I came from Fairy-land this morning. (Here the trick was executed.) Will any gentleman lend me a handkerchief? Now, sir, tie any knot you choose: tighter, tighter, tight as you can, tight as you can: now pull! Why, sir, where's your knot?' Here most of the company good-naturedly laughed at a trick which had amused them before a hundred times. But the dignified judge had no taste for such trivial amusements; and, besides, he thought that all this noise spoilt the pleasure of his wine, and prevented him from catching the flavour of his Rudesheimer. Moreover, the judge was not in a very good humour. The student appeared to have a little idea of the rules and regulations of a fair partnership; for not only did he not regulate his draughts by the moderate

example of his bottle companion, but actually filled the glass of his University friend, and even offered the precious green flask to his neighbour, the cloth-merchant. That humble individual modestly refused the proffer. The unexpected circumstance of having his health drunk by a stranger seemed alone to have produced a great impression upon him; and adding a little more water to his already diluted potation, he bowed reverently to the student, who, in return, did not notice him. All these little circumstances prevented the judge from laughing at the performances of our friend Essper George; for we need hardly mention that the conjuror was no other. His ill-humour did not escape the lord of the cups and balls, who, as was his custom, immediately began to torment him.

'Will you choose a card?' asked the magician of the judge, with a most humble look.

'No, sir!'

Essper George looked very penitent, as if he felt he had taken a great liberty by his application; and so, to compensate for his incorrect behaviour, he asked the magistrate whether he would have the goodness to lend him his watch. The judge was irate, and determined to give the intruder a set down.

'I am not one of those who can be amused by tricks that his grandfather knew.'

'Grandfather!' shrieked Essper; 'what a wonderful grandfather yours must have been! All my tricks are fresh from Fairy-land this morning. Grandfather, indeed! Pray, is this your grandfather?' and here the conjuror, leaning over the table, with a rapid catch drew out from the fat paunch of the judge

a long grinning wooden figure, with great staring eyes, and the parrot nose of a pulcinello. The laugh which followed this sleight-of-hand was loud, long, and universal. The judge lost his temper; and Essper George took the opportunity of the confusion to drink off the glass of Rudesheimer which stood, as we have mentioned, ready charged, at the magistrate's elbow.

The waiter now went round to collect the money of the various guests who had partaken of the boat-supper; and, of course, charged the judge extra for his ordered bottle, bowing at the same time very low, as was proper to so good a customer. These little attentions at inns encourage expenditure. The judge tried at the same time the bottle, which he found empty, and applied to his two boon companions for their quota; but the students affected a sort of brutal surprise at any one having the impudence to imagine that they were going to pay their proportion; and flinging down the money for their own supper on the table, they retired. The magistrate, calling loudly for the landlord, followed them out of the room.

Essper George stood moralising at the table, and emptying every glass whose contents were not utterly drained, with the exception of the tumblers of the cloth-merchants, of whose liquor he did not approve.

'Poor man! to get only one glass out of his own bottle! Ay! call for M. Maas; threaten as you will. Your grandfather will not help you here. Blood out of a wall and money out of a student come the same day. Ah! is your Excellency here?' said Essper, turning round to our two travellers with affected surprise, although he had observed them the whole

time. 'Is your Excellency here? I have been looking for you through Frankfort this whole morning. There! it will do for your glass. It is of chamois leather, and I made it myself, from a beast I caught last summer in the valley of the Rhône.' So saying, he threw over Vivian's neck a neat chain, or cord, of curiously-worked leather.

'Who the devil is this, Grey?' asked the Baron.

'A funny knave, whom I once saved from a thrashing, or something of the kind, which I do him the justice to say he well deserved.'

'Who the devil is this?' said Essper George. 'Why, that is exactly the same question I myself asked when I saw a tall, pompous, proud fellow, dressed like a peacock on a May morning, standing at the door just now. He looked as if he would pass himself off for an ambassador at least; but I told him that if he got his wages paid he was luckier than most servants. Was I right, your Excellency?'

'Poor Ernstorff!' said the Baron, laughing. 'Yes; *he* certainly gets paid. Here, you are a clever varlet; fill your glass.'

'No; no wine. Don't you hear the brawling, and nearly the bloodshed, which are going on upstairs about a sour bottle of Rudesheimer? and here I see two gentles who have ordered the best wine merely to show that they are masters and not servants of the green peacock, and lo! cannot get through a glass. Lord! lord! what is man? If my fat friend and his grandfather would but come down stairs again, here is liquor enough to make wine and water of the Danube; for he comes from thence by his accent. No, I'll have none of your wine; keep it to throw on the sandy floor, that the dust may not hurt your delicate

shoes, nor dirt the hand of the gentleman in green and gold when he cleans them for you in the morning.'

Here the Baron laughed again, and, as he bore his impertinence, Essper George immediately became polite.

'Does your highness go to Ems?'

'We hardly know, my friend.'

'Oh! go there, gentlemen. I have tried them all; Aix-la-Chapelle, Spa, Wiesbaden, Carlsbad, Pyrmont, every one of them; but what are these to Ems? There we all live in the same house and eat from the same table. When there I feel that you are all under my protection; I consider you all as my children. Besides, the country, how delightful! the mountains, the valleys, the river, the woods, and then the company so select! No sharpers, no adventurers, no blacklegs: at Ems you can be taken in by no one except your intimate friend. To Ems, by all means. I would advise you, however, to send the gentleman in the cocked hat on before you to engage rooms; for I can assure you that you will have a hard chance. The baths are very full.'

'And how do you get there, Essper?' asked Vivian.

'Those are subjects on which I never speak,' answered the conjuror, with a solemn air.

'But have you all your stock-in-trade with you, my good fellow? Where is the Mystery?'

'Sold, sir; sold! I never keep to anything long. Variety is the mother of Enjoyment. At Ems I shall not be a conjuror: but I never part with my box. It takes no more room than one of those medicine chests, which I dare say you have got with you in

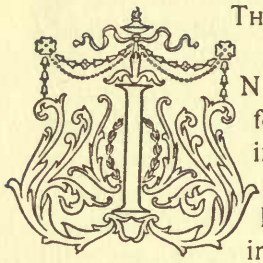
your carriage, to prop up your couple of shattered constitutions.'

'By Jove! you are a merry, impudent fellow,' said the Baron; 'and if you like to get up behind my britzska, you may.'

'No; I carry my own box and my own body, and I shall be at Ems to-morrow in time enough to receive your Lordships.'

CHAPTER V.

The Baths of Ems.



IN a delightful valley of Nassau, formed by the picturesque windings of the Taunus Mountains, and on the banks of the noisy river Lahn, stands a vast brick pile, of irregular architecture, which nearly covers an acre of ground. This building was formerly a favourite palace of the ducal house of Nassau; but the present Prince has thought proper to let out the former residence of his family as an hotel for the accommodation of the company, who in the season frequent this, the most lovely spot in his lovely little duchy. This extensive building contains two hundred and thirty rooms and eighty baths; and these apartments, which are under the management of an official agent, who lives in the 'Princely Bathing House,' for such is its present dignified title, are to be engaged at fixed prices, which are marked over the doors. All the rooms in the upper story of the Princely Bathing House open on, or are almost immediately connected with, a long corridor, which extends the whole length of the building. The ground-floor, besides the space occupied by the baths, also affords a

spacious promenade, arched with stone, and surrounded with stalls, behind which are marshalled vendors of all the possible articles which can be required by the necessities of the frequenters of a watering-place. There you are greeted by the jeweller of the Palais Royal and the marchande de mode of the Rue de la Paix; the print-seller from Mannheim and the china-dealer from Dresden; and other small speculators in the various fancy articles which abound in Vienna, Berlin, Geneva, Basle, Strasburg, and Lausanne; such as pipes, costumes of Swiss peasantry, crosses of Mont Blanc crystal, and all varieties of national bijouterie. All things may here be sold, save those which administer to the nourishment of the body or the pleasure of the palate. Let not those of my readers who have already planned a trip to the sweet vales of the Taunus be frightened by this last sentence. At Ems 'eatables and drinkables' are excellent and abounding; but they are solely supplied by the restaurateur, who farms the monopoly from the Duke. This gentleman, who is a pupil of Beauvillier's, and who has conceived an exquisite cuisine, by adding to the lighter graces of French cookery something of the more solid virtues of the German, presides in a saloon of vast size and magnificent decoration, in which, during the season, upwards of three hundred persons frequent the table d'hôte. It is the etiquette at Ems that, however distinguished or however humble the rank of the visitors, their fare and their treatment must be alike. In one of the most aristocratic countries in the world the sovereign prince and his tradesman subject may be found seated in the morning at the same board, and eating from the same dish, as in the evening they may be seen

staking on the same colour at the gaming-table, and sharing in the same interest at the Redoute.

The situation of Ems is delightful. The mountains which form the valley are not, as in Switzerland, so elevated that they confine the air or seem to impede the facility of breathing. In their fantastic forms the picturesque is not lost in the monotonous, and in the rich covering of their various woods the admiring eye finds at the same time beauty and repose. Opposite the ancient palace, on the banks of the Lahn, are the gardens. In these, in a pavilion, a band of musicians seldom cease from enchanting the visitors by their execution of the most favourite specimens of German and Italian music. Numberless acacia arbours and retired sylvan seats are here to be found, where the student or the contemplative may seek refuge from the noise of his more gay companions, and the tedium of eternal conversation. In these gardens, also, are the billiard-room, and another saloon, in which each night meet, not merely those who are interested in the mysteries of rouge-et-noir, and the chances of roulette, but, in general, the whole of the company, male and female, who are frequenting the baths. In quitting the gardens for a moment, we must not omit mentioning the interesting booth of our friend the restaurateur, where coffee, clear and hot, and exquisite confectionery, are never wanting. Nor should we forget the glittering pennons of the gay boats which glide along the Lahn; nor the handsome donkeys, who, with their white saddles and red bridles, seem not unworthy of the princesses whom they sometimes bear. The gardens, with an alley of limetrees, which are farther on, near the banks of the river, afford easy promenades

to the sick and debilitated; but the more robust and active need not fear monotony in the valley of the Lahn. If they sigh for the champagne country, they can climb the wild passes of the encircling mountains, and from their tops enjoy the most magnificent views of the Rhineland. There they may gaze on that mighty river, flowing through the prolific plain which at the same time it nourishes and adorns, bounded on each side by mountains of every form, clothed with wood or crowned with castles. Or, if they fear the fatigues of the ascent, they may wander farther up the valley, and in the wild dells, romantic forests, and grey ruins of Stein and Nassau, conjure up the old times of feudal tyranny when the forest was the only free land, and he who outraged the laws the only one who did not suffer from their authority.

Besides the Princely Bathing House, I must mention that there was another old and extensive building near it, which, in very full seasons, also accommodated visitors on the same system as the palace. At present, this adjoining building was solely occupied by a Russian Grand Duke, who had engaged it for the season.

Such is a slight description of Ems, a place almost of unique character; for it is a watering-place with every convenience, luxury, and accommodation; and yet without shops, streets, or houses.

The Baron and Vivian were fortunate in finding rooms, for the Baths were very full; the extraordinary beauty of the weather having occasioned a very early season. They found themselves at the Baths early on the morning after their arrival at Coblentz, and at three o'clock in the same day had taken their places at

the dinner table in the great saloon. At the long table upwards of two hundred and fifty guests were assembled, of different nations, and of very different characters. There was the cunning, intriguing Greek, who served well his imperial master the Russian. The order of the patron saint of Moscow, and the glittering stars of other nations which sparkled on his green uniform, told how well he had laboured for the interest of all other countries except his own; but his clear, pale complexion, his delicately trimmed mustachio, his lofty forehead, his arched eyebrow, and his Eastern eye, recalled to the traveller, in spite of his barbarian trappings, the fine countenances of the Ægean, and became a form which apparently might have struggled in Thermopylæ. Next to him was the Austrian diplomatist, the Sosia of all cabinets, in whose gay address and rattling conversation you could hardly recognise the sophistical defender of unauthorised invasion, and the subtle inventor of Holy Alliances and Imperial Leagues. Then came the rich usurer from Frankfort or the prosperous merchant from Hamburg, who, with his wife and daughters, were seeking some recreation from his flourishing counting-house in the sylvan gaieties of a German bathing-place. Flirting with these was an adventurous dancing-master from Paris, whose profession at present was kept in the background, and whose well-curled black hair, diamond pin, and frogged coat hinted at the magnifico incog., and also enabled him, if he did not choose in time to follow his own profession, to pursue another one, which he had also studied, in the profitable mystery of the Redoute. There were many other individuals, whose common-place appearance did not reveal a character which perhaps they did not possess. There

were officers in all uniforms, and there were some uniforms without officers. But all looked perfectly *comme il faut,* and on the whole very select; and if the great persons endeavoured for a moment to forget their dignity, still these slight improprieties were amply made up by the affected dignity of those little persons who had none to forget.

'And how like you the baths of Ems?' the Baron asked of Vivian. 'We shall get better seats to-morrow, and perhaps be among those whom you shall know. I see many friends and some agreeable ones. In the meantime you must make a good dinner to-day, and I will amuse you, and assist your digestion, by putting you up to some of the characters with whom you are dining.'

At this moment a party entered the room, who were rather late in their appearance, but who attracted the attention of Vivian. The group consisted of three persons; a very good-looking young man, who supported on each arm a female. The lady on his right arm was apparently of about five-and-twenty years of age. She was of majestic stature; her complexion of untinged purity. Her features were like those conceptions of Grecian sculptors which, in moments of despondency, we sometimes believe to be ideal. Her full eyes were of the same deep blue as the mountain lake, and gleamed from under their long lashes as that purest of waters beneath its fringing sedge. Her brown light hair was braided from her high forehead, and hung in long full curls over her neck; the mass gathered up into a Grecian knot, and confined by a bandeau of cameos. She wore a dress of black velvet, whose folding drapery was confined round a waist which was in exact symmetry with

the proportions of her full bust and the polished roundness of her bending neck. The countenance of the lady was dignified, without any expression of pride, and reserved, without any of the harshness of austerity. In gazing on her the enraptured spectator for a moment believed that Minerva had forgotten her severity, and had entered into a delightful rivalry with Venus.

Her companion was much younger, not so tall, and of slender form. The long tresses of her chestnut hair shaded her oval face. Her small, aquiline nose, bright hazel eyes, delicate mouth, and the deep colour of her lips, were as remarkable as the transparency of her complexion. The flush of her cheek was singular; it was of a brilliant pink: you may find it in the lip of an Indian shell. The blue veins played beneath her arched forehead, like lightning beneath a rainbow. She was dressed in white, and a damask rose, half hid in her clustering hair, was her only ornament. This lovely creature glided by Vivian Grey almost unnoticed, so fixed was his gaze on her companion. Yet, magnificent as was the style of Lady Madeleine Trevor, there were few who preferred even her commanding graces to the softer beauties of Violet Fane.

This party, having passed Vivian, proceeded to the top of the room, where places had been kept for them. Vivian's eye watched them till they were lost among surrounding visitors: their peculiar loveliness could not deceive him.

'English, no doubt,' observed he to the Baron; 'who can they be?'

'I have not the least idea; that is, I do not exactly know. I think they are English,' answered the

Baron, in so confused a manner that Vivian rather stared. After musing a moment, the Baron recovered himself.

'The unexpected sight of a face we feel that we know, and yet cannot immediately recognise, is extremely annoying; it is almost agitating. They are English. The lady in black is Lady Madeleine Trevor; I knew her in London.'

'And the gentleman?' asked Vivian: 'is the gentleman Mr. Trevor?'

'No; Trevor, poor Trevor, is dead, I think; is, I am sure, dead. That, I am confident, is not he. He was of the ——family, and was in office when I was in England. It was in my diplomatic capacity that I first became acquainted with him. Lady Madeleine was, and, as you see, is, a charming woman; a very charming woman is Lady Madeleine Trevor.'

'And the young lady with her?'

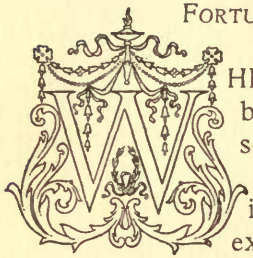
'And the young lady with her, I cannot exactly say; I do not exactly know. Her face is familiar to me, and yet I cannot remember her name. She must have been very young, as you may see, when I was in England; she cannot now be above eighteen. Miss Fane must therefore have been very young when I was in England. Miss Fane; how singular I should have recalled her name! that is her name, Violet Fane, a cousin, or some relation, of Lady Madeleine: good family. Will you have some soup?'

Whether it were from not being among his friends, or some other cause, the Baron was certainly not in his usual spirits this day at dinner. Conversation, which with him was generally as easy as it was brilliant, like a fountain at the same time sparkling and fluent, was evidently constrained. For a few minutes he

talked very fast, and was then uncommunicative, absent, and dull. He, moreover, drank a great deal of wine, which was not his custom; but the grape did not inspire him. Vivian found amusement in his next neighbour, a forward, bustling man, clever in his talk, very fine, but rather vulgar. He was the manager of a company of Austrian actors, and had come to Ems on the chance of forming an engagement for his troop, who generally performed at Vienna. He had been successful in his adventure, the Archduke having engaged the whole band at the New House, and in a few days the troupe were to arrive; at which time the manager was to drop the character of a travelling gentleman, and cease to dine at the table d'hôte of Ems. From this man Vivian learnt that Lady Madeleine Trevor had been at the Baths for some time before the season commenced: that at present hers was the party which, from its long stay and eminent rank, gave the tone to the amusements of the place; the influential circle which those who have frequented watering-places have often observed, and which may be seen at Ems, Spa, or Pyrmont, equally as at Harrowgate, Tunbridge Wells, or Cheltenham.

CHAPTER VI.

Fortune Smiles on Vivian.



HEN dinner was finished the party broke up, and most of them assembled in the gardens. The Baron, whose countenance had assumed its wonted cheerfulness, and who excused his previous dulness by the usual story of a sudden headache, proposed to Vivian to join the promenade. The gardens were very full, and the Baron recognised many of his acquaintance.

'My dear Colonel, who possibly expected to meet you here? Why! did you dine in the saloon? I only arrived this morning. This is my friend, Mr. Grey; Colonel von Trumpetson.'

'An Englishman, I believe?' said the Colonel, bowing. He was a starch *militaire*, with a blue frock coat buttoned up to his chin, a bald head with a few grey hairs, and long, thin mustachios like a mandarin's. 'An Englishman, I believe; pray, sir, will you inform me whether the household troops in England wear the Marbœuf cuirass?'

'Sir!' said Vivian.

'I esteem myself particularly fortunate in thus meeting with an English gentleman. It was only at

dinner to-day that a controversy arose between Major von Musquetoon and the Prince of Buttonstein on this point. As I said to the Prince, you may argue for ever, for at present we cannot decide the fact. How little did I think when I parted from the Major that in a few minutes I should be able to settle the question beyond a doubt. I esteem myself particularly fortunate in meeting with an Englishman.'

'I regret to say, Colonel, that the question is one that I cannot decide.'

'Sir, I wish you good morning,' said the Colonel, very drily; and, staring keenly at Vivian, he walked away.

'He is good enough to fight, I suppose,' said the Baron, with a smile and shrug of the shoulders, which seemed to return thanks to Providence for having been educated in the civil service.

At this moment Lady Madeleine Trevor, leaning on the arm of the same gentleman, passed, and the Baron bowed. The bow was coldly returned.

'You know her Ladyship, then! well!'

'I did know her,' said the Baron; 'but I see from her bow that I am at present in no very high favour. The truth is, she is a charming woman, but I never expected to see her in Germany, and there was some little commission of hers which I neglected, some little order for Eau de Cologne, or a message about a worked pocket-handkerchief, which I utterly forgot: and then, I never wrote! and you know, Grey, that these little sins of omission are never forgiven by women.'

'My dear friend, De Konigstein, one pinch! one pinch!' chirped out a little old odd-looking man, with a *poudré* head, and dressed in a costume in

which the glories of the *vieille cour* seemed to retire with reluctance. A diamond ring twinkled on the snuffy hand, which was encircled by a rich ruffle of dirty lace. The brown coat was not modern, and yet not quite such an one as was worn by its master when he went to see the King dine in public at Versailles before the Revolution: large silver buckles still adorned the well-polished shoes; and silk stockings, whose hue was originally black, were picked out with clock-work of gold.

'My dear Marquis, I am most happy to see you; will you try the boulangero?'

'With pleasure! A-a-h! what a box! a Louis-Quatorze, I think?'

'Oh, no! by no means so old.'

'Pardon me, my dear De Konigstein; I think a Louis-Quatorze.'

'I bought it in Sicily.'

'A-a-h!' slowly exclaimed the little man, shaking his head.

'Well, good afternoon,' said the Baron, passing on.

'My dear De Konigstein, one pinch; you have often said you have a particular regard for me.'

'My dear Marquis!'

'A-a-h! I thought so; you have often said you would serve me, if possible.'

'My dear Marquis, be brief.'

'A-a-h! I will. There's a cursed crusty old Prussian officer here; one Colonel von Trumpetson.'

'Well, what can I do? you are surely not going to fight him!'

'A-a-h! no, no; I wish you to speak to him.'

'Well, what?'

'He takes snuff.'

'What is that to me?'

'He has got a box.'

'Well!'

'It is a Louis-Quatorze; could not you get it for me?'

'Good morning to you,' said the Baron, pulling on Vivian.

'You have had the pleasure, Grey, of meeting this afternoon two men who have each only one idea. Colonel von Trumpetson and the Marquis de la Tabatière are equally tiresome. But are they more tiresome than any other man who always speaks on the same subject? We are more irritable, but not more wearied, with a man who is always thinking of the pattern of a button-hole, or the shape of a snuff-box, than with one who is always talking about pictures, or chemistry, or politics. The true bore is that man who thinks the world is only interested in one subject, because he himself can only comprehend one.'

Here Lady Madeleine passed again, and this time the Baron's eyes were fixed on the ground.

A buzz and a bustle at the other end of the gardens to which the Baron and Vivian were advancing, announced the entry of the Grand Duke. His Imperial Highness was a tall man, with a quick, piercing eye, which was prevented from giving to his countenance the expression of intellect, which it otherwise would have done, by the dull and almost brutal effect of his flat, Calmuck nose. He was dressed in a plain green uniform, adorned by a single star; but his tightened waist, his stiff stock, and the elaborate attention which had evidently been bestowed upon his mustachio, denoted the military fop. The Grand Duke was accompanied by three or four stiff and

stately-looking personages, in whom the severity of the martinet seemed sunk in the servility of the aide-de-camp.

The Baron bowed very low to the Prince as he drew near, and his Highness, taking off his cocked-hat with an appearance of cordial condescension, made a full stop. The silent gentlemen in the rear, who had not anticipated this suspense in their promenade, almost foundered on the heels of their royal master; and, frightened at the imminency of the profanation, forgot their stiff pomp in a precipitate retreat of half a yard.

'Baron,' said his Highness, 'why have I not seen you at the New House?'

'I have but this moment arrived, may it please your Imperial Highness.'

'Your companion,' continued the Grand Duke, pointing very graciously to Vivian.

'My intimate friend, my fellow-traveller, and an Englishman. May I have the honour of presenting Mr. Grey to your Imperial Highness?'

'Any friends of the Baron von Konigstein I shall always feel great pleasure in having presented to me. Sir, I feel great pleasure in having you presented to me. Sir, you ought to be proud of the name of Englishman; sir, the English are a noble nation; sir, I have the highest respect for the English nation!'

Vivian of course bowed very low; and of course made a very proper speech on the occasion, which, as all speeches of that kind should be, was very dutiful and quite inaudible.

'And what news from Berlin, Baron? let us move on,' and the Baron turned with the Grank Duke.

The silent gentlemen, settling their mustachios, followed in the rear. For about half an hour, anecdote after anecdote, scene after scene, caricature after caricature, were poured out with prodigal expenditure for the amusement of the Prince, who did nothing during the exhibition but smile, stroke his whiskers, and at the end of the best stories fence with his forefinger at the Baron's side, with a gentle laugh, and a mock shake of the head, and an 'Eh! Von Konigstein, you're too bad!' Here Lady Madeleine Trevor passed again, and the Grand Duke's hat nearly touched the ground. He received a most gracious bow.

'Finish the story about Salvinski, Baron, and then I will present you for a reward to the most lovely creature in existence, a countrywoman of your friend, Lady Madeleine Trevor.'

'I have the honour of a slight acquaintance with her,' said the Baron; 'I had the pleasure of knowing her in England.'

'Indeed! Fortunate mortal! I see she has stopped, talking to some stranger. Let us turn and join her.'

The Grand Duke and the two friends accordingly turned, and of course the silent gentlemen in the rear followed with due precision.

'Lady Madeleine!' said the Grand Duke, 'I flattered myself for a moment that I might have had the honour of presenting to you a gentleman for whom I have a great esteem; but he has proved to me that he is more fortunate than myself, since he had the honour before me of an acquaintance with Lady Madeleine Trevor.'

'I have not forgotten Baron von Konigstein,' said her ladyship, with a serious air. 'May I ask his

Highness how he prospered in his negotiation with the Austrian troop?'

'Perfectly successful! Inspired by your Ladyship's approbation, my steward has really done wonders. He almost deserves a diplomatic appointment for the talent which he has shown; but what should I do without Cracowsky? Lady Madeleine, can you conceive what I should do without Cracowsky?'

'Not in the least.'

'Cracowsky is everything to me. It is impossible to say what Cracowsky is to me. I owe everything to Cracowsky. To Cracowsky I owe being here.' The Grand Duke bowed very low, for this eulogium on his steward also conveyed a compliment to her Ladyship. The Grand Duke was certainly right in believing that he owed his summer excursion to Ems to his steward. That wily Pole regularly every year put his Imperial master's summer excursion up to auction, and according to the biddings of the proprietors of the chief baths did he take care that his master regulated his visit. The restaurateur of Ems, in collusion with the official agent of the Duke of Nassau, were fortunate this season in having the Grand Duke knocked down to them.

'May I flatter myself that Miss Fane feels herself better?' asked the Grand Duke.

'She certainly does feel herself better, but my anxiety about her does not decrease. In her illness apparent convalescence is sometimes as alarming as suffering.'

The Grand Duke continued by the side of Lady Madeleine for about twenty minutes, seizing every opportunity of uttering, in the most courtly tone, inane compliments; and then trusting that he might

soon have her Ladyship's opinion respecting the Austrian troop at the New House, and that Von Konigstein and his English friend would not delay letting him see them there, his Imperial Highness, followed by his silent suite, left the gardens.

'I am afraid Lady Madeleine must have almost mistaken me for a taciturn lord chamberlain,' said the Baron, occupying immediately the Grand Duke's vacated side.

'Baron von Konigstein must be very changed if silence be imputed to him as a fault,' said Lady Madeleine.

'Baron von Konigstein is very much changed since last he had the pleasure of conversing with Lady Madeleine Trevor; more changed than she will perhaps believe; more changed than he can sometimes himself believe. I hope that he will not be less acceptable to Lady Madeleine Trevor because he is no longer rash, passionate, and unthinking; because he has learnt to live more for others and less for himself.'

'Baron von Konigstein does indeed appear changed, since, by his own account, he has become, in a very few years, a being in whose existence philosophers scarcely believe, a perfect man.'

'My self-conceit has been so often reproved by you, that I will not apologise for a quality which I almost flattered myself I no longer possessed; but you will excuse, I am sure, one who, in zealous haste to prove himself amended, has, I fear, almost shown that he has deceived himself.'

Some strange thoughts occurred to Vivian while this conversation was taking place. 'Is this a woman to resent the neglect of an order for Eau de Cologne? My dear Von Konigstein, you are a very pleasant

fellow, but this is not the way men apologise for the non-purchase of a pocket-handkerchief!'

'Have you been long at Ems?' inquired the Baron, with an air of great deference.

'Nearly a month: we are travelling in consequence of the ill-health of a relation. It was our intention to have gone on to Pisa, but our physician, in consequence of the extreme heat of the summer, is afraid of the fatigue of travelling, and has recommended Ems. The air between these mountains is very soft and pure, and I have no reason to regret at present that we have not advanced farther on our journey.'

'The lady who was with your party at dinner is, I fear, your invalid. She certainly does not look like one. I think,' said the Baron, with an effort, 'I think that her face is not unknown to me. It is difficult, even after so many years, to mistake Miss——'

'Fane,' said Lady Madeleine, firmly; for it seemed that the Baron required a little assistance at the end of his sentence.

'Ems,' returned his Excellency, with great rapidity of utterance, 'Ems is a charming place, at least to me. I have, within these few years, quite recurred to the feelings of my boyhood; nothing to me is more disgustingly wearisome than the gay bustle of a city. My present diplomatic appointment at Frankfort ensures a constant life among the most charming scenes of nature. Naples, which was offered to me, I refused. Eight years ago, I should have thought an appointment at Naples a Paradise on earth.'

'You must indeed be changed.'

'How beautiful is the vicinity of the Rhine! I have passed within these three days, for almost the twentieth time in my life, through the Rheingau; and

yet how fresh, and lovely, and novel, seemed all its various beauties! My young travelling companion is enthusiastic about this gem of Germany. He is one of your Ladyship's countrymen. Might I take the liberty of presenting to you Mr. Grey?'

Lady Madeleine, as if it could now no longer be postponed, introduced to the two gentlemen her brother, Mr. St. George. This gentleman, who, during the whole previous conversation, had kept his head in a horizontal position, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and apparently unconscious that any one was conversing with his sister, because, according to the English custom, he was not introduced, now suddenly turned round, and welcomed his acquaintance with cordiality.

'Mr. Grey,' asked her Ladyship, 'are you of Dorsetshire?'

'My mother is a Dorsetshire woman; her family name is Vivian, which name I also bear.'

'Then I think we are longer acquainted than we have been introduced. I met your father at Sir Hargrave Vivian's last Christmas. He spoke of you in those terms that make me glad that I have met his son. You have been long from England, I think?'

'Nearly a year and a half.'

The Baron had resigned his place by Lady Madeleine, and was already in close conversation with Mr. St. George, from whose arm Lady Madeleine's was disengaged. No one acted the part of Asmodeus with greater spirit than his Excellency; and the secret history of every person whose secret history could be amusing delighted Mr. St. George.

'There,' said the Baron, 'goes the son of an unknown father; his mother followed the camp, and her

offspring was early initiated in the mysteries of military petty larceny. As he grew up he became the most skilful plunderer that ever rifled the dying of both sides. Before he was twenty he followed the army as a petty chapman, and amassed an excellent fortune by re-acquiring after a battle the very goods and trinkets which he had sold at an immense price before it. Such a wretch could do nothing but prosper, and in due time the sutler's brat became a commissary-general. He made millions in a period of general starvation, and cleared at least a hundred thousand dollars by embezzling the shoe leather during a retreat. He is now a baron, covered with orders and his daughters are married to some of our first nobles. There goes a Polish Count who is one of the greatest gamblers in Christendom. In the same season he lost to a Russian general, at one game of chess, his chief castle and sixteen thousand acres of woodland; and recovered himself on another game, on which he won of a Turkish Pasha one hundred and eighty thousand leopard skins. The Turk, who was a man of strict honour, paid the Count by embezzling the tribute in kind of the province he governed; and as on quarter-day he could not, of course, make up his accounts with the Divan, he joined the Greeks.'

While the Baron was entertaining Mr. St. George, the conversation between Lady Madeleine and Vivian proceeded.

'Your father expressed great disappointment to me at his being prevented paying you a visit. Do you not long to see him?'

'More than I can express. Did you think him in good spirits?'

'Generally so; as cheerful as all fathers can be without their only son.'

'Did he complain, then, of my absence?'

'He regretted it.'

'I linger in Germany with the hope of seeing him; otherwise I should have now been much further south. Do you find Sir Hargrave as amusing as ever?'

'When is he otherwise than the most delightful of old men? Sir Hargrave is one of my great favourites. I should like to persuade you to return and see them all. Cannot you fancy Chester Grange very beautiful now? Albert!' said her Ladyship, turning to her brother, 'what is the number of our apartments? Mr. Grey, the sun has now disappeared, and I fear the night air among these mountains. We have hardly yet summer nights, though we certainly have summer days. We shall be happy to see you at our rooms.' So saying, bowing very cordially to Vivian and coldly to the Baron, Lady Madeleine left the gardens.

'There goes the most delightful woman in the world,' said the Baron; 'how fortunate that you know her! for really, as you might have observed, I have no great claims on her indulgent notice. I was certainly very wild in England; but then young men, you know, Grey! and I did not leave a card, or call, before I went; and the English are very stiff and precise about those things; and the Trevors had been very kind to me. I think we had better take a little coffee now; and then, if you like, we will just stroll into the REDOUTE.'

In a brilliantly-illuminated saloon, adorned with Corinthian columns and casts from some of the most famous antique statues, assembled, between nine and

ten o'clock in the evening, many of the visitors at Ems. On each side of the room was placed a long narrow table, one of which was covered with green baize, and unattended; while the variously-coloured leathern surface of the other was closely surrounded by an interested crowd. Behind this table stood two individuals of different appearance. The first was a short, thick man, whose only business was dealing certain portions of playing cards with quick succession one after the other: and as the fate of the table was decided by this process, did his companion, a very tall, thin man, throw various pieces of money upon certain stakes, which were deposited by the bystanders on different parts of the table; or, which was much oftener the case, with a silver rake with a long ebony handle, sweep into a large inclosure near him the scattered sums. This inclosure was called the Bank, and the mysterious ceremony in which these persons were assisting was the celebrated game of rouge-et-noir. A deep silence was strictly preserved by those who immediately surrounded the table; no voice was heard save that of the little, short, stout dealer, when, without an expression of the least interest, he seemed mechanically to announce the fate of the different colours. No other sound was heard, except the jingle of the dollars and Napoleons, and the ominous rake of the tall, thin banker. The countenances of those who were hazarding their money were grave and gloomy: their eyes were fixed, their brows contracted, and their lips projected; and yet there was an evident effort visible to show that they were both easy and unconcerned. Each player held in his hand a small piece of pasteboard, on which, with a steel pricker, he marked

the run of the cards, in order, from his observations, to regulate his own play. The rouge-et-noir player imagines that chance is not capricious. Those who were not interested in the game promenaded in two lines within the tables, or, seated in recesses between the pillars, formed small parties for conversation.

'I suppose we must throw away a dollar or two,' said the Baron, as he walked up to the table.

'My dear De Konigstein, one pinch!'

'Ah! Marquess, what fortune to-night?'

'Bad! I have lost my Napoleon: I never risk further. There is that cursed crusty old von Trumpetson, persisting, as usual, in his run of bad luck; because he never will give in. Trust me, my dear De Konigstein, it will end in his ruin; and then, if there be a sale of his effects, I shall, perhaps, get his snuff-box; a-a-h!'

'Come, shall I throw down a couple of Napoleons on joint account. I do not care much for play myself; but I suppose at Ems, we must make up our minds to lose a few Louis. Here! now, for the red; joint account, mind!'

'Done.'

'There's the Grand Duke! Let us go and make our bow; we need not stick at the table as if our whole soul were staked with our crown-pieces.' So saying, the gentlemen walked up to the top of the room.

'Why, Grey! Surely no, it cannot be, and yet it is. De Bœffleurs, how d'ye do?' said the Baron, with a face beaming with joy and a hearty shake of the hand. 'My dear fellow, how did you manage to get off so soon? I thought you were not to be here for a fortnight: we only arrived ourselves to-day.'

'Yes; but I have made an arrangement which I did not anticipate; and so I posted after you at once. Whom do you think I have brought with me?'

'Who?'

'Salvinski.'

'Ah! And the Count?'

'Follows immediately. I expect him to-morrow or next day. Salvinski is talking to the Grand Duke; and see, he beckons to me. I suppose I am going to be presented.'

The Chevalier moved forward, followed by the Baron and Vivian.

'Any friend of Prince Salvinski I shall always have great pleasure in having presented to me. Chevalier, I feel great pleasure in having you presented to me. Chevalier, you ought to be proud of the name of Frenchman. Chevalier, the French are a great nation. Chevalier, I have the highest respect for the French nation.'

'The most subtile diplomatist,' thought Vivian, as he recalled to mind his own introduction, 'would be puzzled to decide to which interest his Imperial Highness leans.'

The Grand Duke now entered into conversation with the Prince, and most of the circle who surrounded him. As his Imperial Highness was addressing Vivian, the Baron let slip our hero's arm, and, taking that of the Chevalier de Bœffleurs, began walking up and down the room with him, and was soon engaged in animated conversation. In a few minutes the Grand Duke, bowing to his circle, made a move, and regained the side of a Saxon lady, from whose interesting company he had been disturbed by the arrival of Prince Salvinski; an individual of whose

long stories and dull romances the Grand Duke had, from experience, a particular dread: but his Highness was always very courteous to the Poles.

'Grey, I have despatched De Bœffleurs to the house, to instruct his servant and Ernstorff to do the impossible, in order that our rooms may be all together. You will be delighted with De Bœffleurs when you know him, and I expect you to be great friends. By-the-bye, his unexpected arrival has quite made us forget our venture at rouge-et-noir. Of course we are too late now for anything; even if we had been fortunate, our stake, remaining on the table, is, of course, lost: we may as well, however, walk up.' So saying, the Baron reached the table.

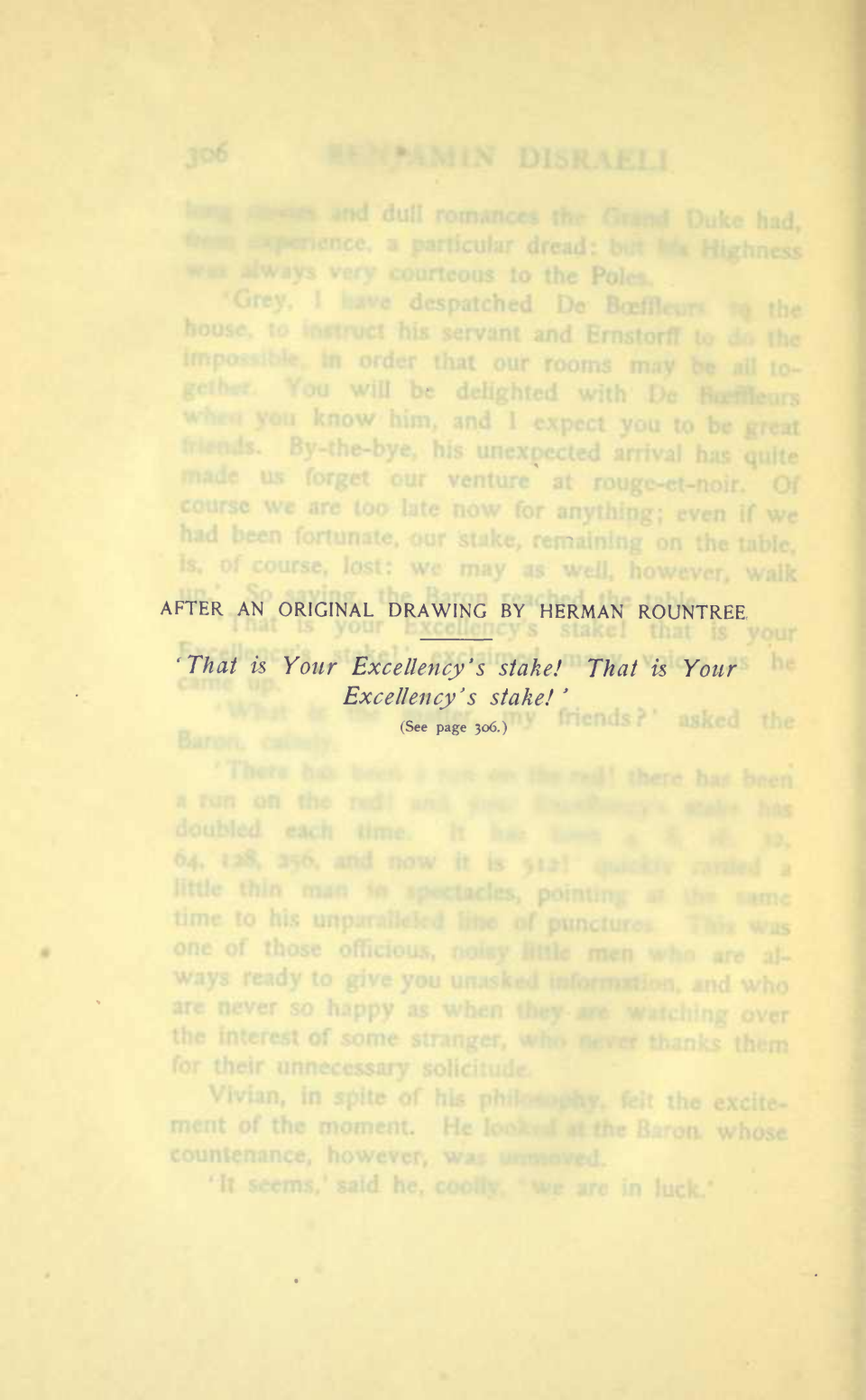
'That is your Excellency's stake! that is your Excellency's stake!' exclaimed many voices as he came up.

'What is the matter, my friends?' asked the Baron, calmly.

'There has been a run on the red! there has been a run on the red! and your Excellency's stake has doubled each time. It has been 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, and now it is 512!' quickly rattled a little thin man in spectacles, pointing at the same time to his unparalleled line of punctures. This was one of those officious, noisy little men who are always ready to give you unasked information, and who are never so happy as when they are watching over the interest of some stranger, who never thanks them for their unnecessary solicitude.

Vivian, in spite of his philosophy, felt the excitement of the moment. He looked at the Baron, whose countenance, however, was unmoved.

'It seems,' said he, coolly, 'we are in luck.'



AFTER AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY HERMAN ROUNTREE

'That is Your Excellency's stake! That is Your Excellency's stake!'

(See page 306.)

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'The stake, then, is not all your own?' eagerly asked the little man in spectacles.

'No; part of it is yours, sir,' answered the Baron, drily.

'I am going to deal,' said the short, thick man behind. 'Is the board cleared?'

'Your excellency, then, allows the stake to remain?' inquired the tall, thin banker, with affected nonchalance.

'Oh! certainly,' said the Baron, with real nonchalance.

'Three, eight, fourteen, twenty-four, thirty-four. Rouge 34——'

All crowded nearer; the table was surrounded five or six deep, for the wonderful run of luck had got wind, and nearly the whole room were round the table. Indeed, the Grand Duke and Saxon lady, and of course the silent suite, were left alone at the upper part of the room. The tall banker did not conceal his agitation. Even the short, stout dealer ceased to be a machine. All looked anxious except the Baron. Vivian looked at the table; his Excellency watched, with a keen eye, the little dealer. No one even breathed as the cards descended. 'Ten, twenty (here the countenance of the banker brightened), twenty-two, twenty-five, twenty-eight, thirty-one; noir 31. The bank's broke: no more play to-night. The roulette table opens immediately.'

In spite of the great interest which had been excited, nearly the whole crowd, without waiting to congratulate the Baron, rushed to the opposite side of the room, in order to secure places at the roulette table.

'Put these five hundred and twelve Napoleons into a bag,' said the Baron. 'Grey, this is your share.

With regard to the other half, Mr. Hermann, what bills have you got?'

'Two on Gogel of Frankfort for two hundred and fifty each, and these twelve Napoleons will make it right,' said the tall banker, as he opened a large black pocket-book, from which he took out two small bits of paper. The Baron examined them, and after having seen them endorsed, put them into his pocket, not forgetting the twelve Napoleons; and then taking Vivian's arm, and regretting extremely that he should have the trouble of carrying such a weight, he wished Mr. Hermann a very good night and success at his roulette, and walked with his companion quietly home. Thus passed a day at Ems!

CHAPTER VII.

Two Charmers.

IN THE following morning, Vivian met with his friend Essper George, behind a small stall in the bazaar.

'Well, my Lord, what do you wish? Here are Eau de Cologne, violet soap, and watch-ribbons; a smelling bottle of Ems crystal; a snuff-box of fig-tree wood. Name your price: the least trifle that can be given by a man who breaks a bank must be more than my whole stock-in-trade is worth.'

'I have not paid you yet, Essper, for my glass chain. There is your share of my winnings, the fame of which, it seems, has reached even you!' added Vivian, with no pleased air.

'I thank you, sir, for the Nap; but I hope I have not offended by alluding to a certain event, which shall be passed over in silence,' continued Essper George, with a look of mock solemnity. 'I really think you have but a faint appetite for good fortune. They deserve her most who value her least.'

'Have you any patrons at Ems, Essper, that have induced you to fix on this place in particular for your speculations? Here, I should think, you have many

active rivals,' said Vivian, looking round the various stalls.

'I have a patron here who has never deceived, and who will never desert me; I want no other; and that's myself. Now here comes a party: could you just tell me the name of that tall lady now?'

'If I tell you it is Lady Madeleine Trevor, what will it profit you?'

Before Vivian could well finish his sentence Essper had drawn out a long horn from beneath his small counter, and sounded a blast which echoed through the arched passages. The attention of every one was excited, and no part of the following speech was lost:—

'The celebrated Essper George, fresh from Fairy-land, dealer in pomatum and all sorts of perfumery, watches, crosses, Ems crystal, coloured prints, Dutch toys, Dresden china, Venetian chains, Neapolitan coral, French crackers, chamois bracelets, tame poodles, and Cherokee corkscrews, mender of mandolins and all other musical instruments, to Lady Madeleine Trevor, has just arrived at Ems, where he only intends to stay two or three days, and a few more weeks besides. Now, gracious lady, what do you wish?'

'And who,' said Lady Madeleine, smiling, 'is this?'

'The celebrated Essper George, just ——' again commenced the conjuror; but Vivian prevented the repetition.

'He is an odd knave, Lady Madeleine, that I have met with before, at other places. I believe I may add an honest one. What say you, Essper?'

'More honest than moonlight, gracious lady, for that deceives every one; and less honest than self-praise, for that deceives no one.'

'My friend, you have a ready wit.'

'My wit is like a bustling servant, gracious lady; always ready when not wanted, and never present at a pinch.'

'Come, I must have a pair of your chamois bracelets. How sell you them?'

'I sell nothing; all here is gratis to beauty, virtue, and nobility: and these are my only customers.'

'Thanks will not supply a stock-in-trade, though, Essper,' said Vivian.

'Very true! but my customers are apt to leave some slight testimonies behind them of the obligations which they are under to me; and these, at the same time, are the prop of my estate and the proof of their discretion. But who comes here?' said Essper, drawing out his horn. The sight of this instrument reminded Lady Madeleine how greatly the effect of music is heightened by distance, and she made a speedy retreat, yielding her place to a family procession of a striking character.

Three daughters abreast, flanked by two elder sons, formed the first file. The father, a portly, prosperous-looking man, followed, with his lady on his arm. Then came two nursery maids, with three children, between the tender ages of five and six. The second division of the grand army, consisting of three younger sons, immediately followed. This was commanded by a tutor. A governess and two young daughters then advanced; and then came the extreme rear, the sutlers of the camp, in the persons of two footmen in rich liveries, who each bore a basket on his arm, filled with various fancy articles, which had been all purchased during the promenade of this nation through only part of the bazaar.

The trumpet of Essper George produced a due

effect upon the great party. The commander-in-chief stopped at his little stall, and, as if this were the signal for general attack and plunder, the files were immediately broken up. Each individual dashed at his prey, and the only ones who struggled to maintain a semblance of discipline were the nursery maids, the tutor, and the governess, who experienced the greatest difficulty in suppressing the early taste which the detachment of light infantry indicated for booty. But Essper George was in his element: he joked, he assisted, he exhibited, he explained; tapped the cheeks of the children and complimented the elder ones; and finally, having parted at a prodigious profit, with nearly his whole stock, paid himself out of a large and heavy purse, which the portly father, in his utter inability to comprehend the complicated accounts and the debased currency, with great frankness deposited in the hands of the master of the stall, desiring him to settle his own claims.

'I hope I may be allowed to ask after Miss Fane,' said Vivian.

'She continues better; we are now about to join her in the Limewalk. If you will join our morning stroll, it will give us much pleasure.'

Nothing in the world could give Vivian greater pleasure; he felt himself impelled to the side of Lady Madeleine; and only regretted his acquaintance with the Baron because he felt conscious that there was some secret cause which prevented that intimacy from existing between his Excellency and the Trevor party which his talents and his position would otherwise have easily produced.

'By-the-bye,' said Lady Madeleine, 'I do not know whether I may be allowed to congratulate you upon

your brilliant success at the Redoute last night. It is fortunate that all have not to regret your arrival at Ems so much as poor Mr. Hermann.'

'The run was extraordinary. I am only sorry that the goddess should have showered her favours on one who neither deserves nor desires them; for I have no wish to be rich; and as I never lost by her caprices, it is hardly fair that I should gain by them.'

'You do not play, then, much?'

'I never played in my life till last night. Gambling has never been one of my follies, although my catalogue of errors is fuller, perhaps, than most men's.'

'I think Baron von Konigstein was your partner in the exploit?'

'He was; and apparently as little pleased at the issue as myself.'

'Indeed! Have you known the Baron long?'

'We are only friends of a week. I have been living, ever since I was in Germany, a very retired life. A circumstance of a most painful nature drove me from England; a circumstance of which I can hardly flatter myself, and can hardly wish, that you should be ignorant.'

'I learnt the sad history from one who, while he spoke the truth, spoke of the living sufferer in terms of the fondest affection.'

'A father!' said Vivian, agitated, 'a father can hardly be expected to be impartial.'

'Such a father as yours may. I only wish that he was with us now, to assist me in bringing about what he must greatly desire, your return to England.'

'It cannot be. I look back to the last year which I spent in that country with feelings of such disgust, I look forward to a return to that country with feel-

ings of such repugnance that—— but I feel I am trespassing beyond all bounds in touching on these subjects.'

'I promised your father that in case we met I would seek your society. I have suffered too much myself not to understand how dangerous and how deceitful is the excess of grief. You have allowed yourself to be overcome by that which Providence intended as a lesson of instruction, not as a sentence of despair. In your solitude you have increased the shadow of those fantasies of a heated brain, which converse with the pure sunshine of the world would have enabled you to dispel.'

'The pure sunshine of the world, Lady Madeleine! would that it had ever lighted me! My youth flourished in the unwholesome sultriness of a blighted atmosphere, which I mistook for the resplendent brilliancy of a summer day. How deceived I was, you may judge, not certainly from finding me here; but I am here because I have ceased to suffer, only in having ceased to hope.'

'You have ceased to hope, because hope and consolation are not the companions of solitude, which are of a darker nature. Hope and consolation spring from the social affections. Converse with the world will do more for you than all the arguments of philosophers. I hope yet to find you a believer in the existence of that good which we all worship and all pursue. Happiness comes when we least expect it, and to those who strive least to obtain it; as you were fortunate yesterday at the Redoute, when you played without an idea of winning.'

They were in the Limewalk: gay sounds greeted them, and Miss Fane came forward from a light-

hearted band to welcome her cousin. She had to propose a walk to the New Spring, which she was prepared for Lady Madeleine to resist on the ground of her cousin's health. But Miss Fane combated all the objections with airy merriment, and with a bright resource that never flagged. As she bent her head slightly to Vivian, ere she hastened back to her companions to announce the success of her mission, it seemed to him that he had never beheld so animated and beaming a countenance, or glanced upon a form of such ineffable and sparkling grace.

'You would scarcely imagine, Mr. Grey, that we are travelling for my cousin's health, nor do her physicians, indeed, give us any cause for serious uneasiness; yet I cannot help feeling at times great anxiety. Her flushed cheek and the alarming languor which succeeds any excitement make me fear her complaint may be more deeply seated than they are willing to acknowledge.'

'They were saying the other day that the extraordinary heat of this season must end in an earthquake, or some great convulsion of nature. That would bring languor.'

'We are willing to adopt any reasoning that gives us hope, but her mother died of consumption.'

CHAPTER VIII.

The Baron Tells a Strange Story.

HEN the walking party returned home they found a crowd of idle servants assembled opposite the house, round a group of equipages, consisting of two enormous crimson carriages, a britzska, and a large caravan, on all which vehicles the same coat of arms was ostentatiously blazoned.

'Some new guests!' said Miss Fane.

'It must be the singular party that we watched this morning in the bazaar,' said Lady Madeleine. 'Violet! I have such a curious character to introduce you to, a particular friend of Mr. Grey, who wishes very much to have the honour of your acquaintance, Mr. Essper George.'

'These carriages, then, belong to him?'

'Not exactly,' said Vivian.

In an hour's time, the party again met at dinner in the saloon. By the joint exertions of Ernstorff and Mr. St. George's servants, the Baron, Vivian, and the Chevalier de Bœffleurs were now seated next to the party of Lady Madeleine Trevor.

'My horses fortunately arrived from Frankfort this morning,' said the Baron. 'Mr. St. George and my-

self have been taking a ride very far up the valley. Has your Ladyship yet been to the Castle of Nassau?'

'We have not. The expedition has been one of those plans often arranged and never executed.'

'You should go. The ruin is one of the finest in Germany. An expedition to Nassau Castle would be a capital foundation for a pic-nic. Conceive a beautiful valley, discovered by a knight, in the middle ages, following the track of a stag. How romantic! The very incident vouches for its sweet seclusion. Cannot you imagine the wooded mountains, the old grey ruin, the sound of the unseen river? What more should we want, except agreeable company, fine music, and the best provisions, to fancy ourselves in Paradise?'

'I wish the plan were practicable,' said Mr. St. George.

'I take the whole arrangement upon myself; there is not a difficulty. The ladies shall go on donkeys, or we might make a water excursion of it part of the way, and the donkeys can meet us at the pass near Stein, and then the gentlemen may walk; and if you fear the water at night, why then the carriages may come round: and if your own be too heavy for mountain roads, my britzska is always at your command. You see there is not a difficulty.'

'Not a difficulty,' said Mr. St. George. 'Madeleine, we only wait your consent.'

'I think we had better put off the execution of our plan till June is a little more advanced. We must have a fine summer night for Violet.'

'Well, then, I hold the whole party present engaged to follow my standard whenever I have permission from authority to unfold it,' said the Baron,

bowing to Lady Madeleine: 'and lest, on cool reflection, I shall not possess influence enough to procure the appointment, I shall, like a skilful orator, take advantage of your feelings, which gratitude for this excellent plan must have already enlisted in my favour, and propose myself as Master of the Ceremonies.' The Baron's eye caught Lady Madeleine's as he uttered this, and something like a smile, rather of pity than derision, lighted up her face.

Here Vivian turned round to give some directions to an attendant, and to his annoyance found Essper George standing behind his chair.

'Is there anything you want, sir?'

'Who ordered you here?'

'My duty.'

'In what capacity do you attend?'

'As your servant, sir?'

'I insist upon your leaving the room directly.'

'Ah! my friend, Essper George,' said Lady Madeleine, 'are you there? What is the matter?'

'This, then, is Essper George!' said Violet Fane. 'What kind of being can he possibly be? What indeed is the matter?'

'I am merely discharging a servant at a moment's warning, Miss Fane; and if you wish to engage his constant attendance upon yourself, I have no objection to give him a character for the occasion.'

'What do you want, Essper?' said Miss Fane.

'Merely to see whether your walk this morning had done your appetites any good,' answered Essper, looking disconsolate; 'and so I thought I might make myself useful at the same time. And though I do not bring on the soup in a cocked hat, and carve the venison with a couteau-de-chasse,' continued he, bow-

ing very low to Ernstorff, who, standing stiff behind his master's chair, seemed utterly unaware that any other person in the room could experience a necessity; 'still I can change a plate or hand the wine without cracking the first, or drinking the second.'

'And very good qualities, too!' said Miss Fane. 'Come, Essper, you shall put your accomplishments into practice immediately; change my plate.'

This Essper did with dexterity and quiet, displaying at the same time a small white hand, on the back of which was marked a comet and three daggers. As he had the discretion not to open his mouth, and performed all his duties with skill, his intrusion in a few minutes was not only pardoned but forgotten.

'There has been a great addition to the visitors to-day, I see,' said Mr. St. George. 'Who are the new comers?'

'I will tell you all about them' said the Baron. 'This family is one of those whose existence astounds the continent much more than any of your mighty dukes and earls, whose fortunes, though colossal, can be conceived, and whose rank is understood. Mr. Fitzloom is a very different personage, for thirty years ago he was a journeyman cotton-spinner. Some miraculous invention in machinery entitled him to a patent, which has made him one of the great proprietors of England. He has lately been returned a member for a manufacturing town, and he intends to get over the first two years of his parliamentary career by successively monopolising the accommodation of all the principal cities of France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, and by raising the price of provisions and post-horses through a track of five thousand

miles. My information is authentic, for I had a casual acquaintance with him in England. There was some talk of a contract for supplying our army from England, and I saw Fitzloom often on the subject. I have spoken to him to-day. This is by no means the first of a species that we have had in Germany. I can assure you that the plain traveller feels seriously the inconvenience of following such a caravan; their money flows with such unwise prodigality that real liberality ceases to be valued; and many of your nobility have complained to me that in their travels they are now often expostulated with on account of their parsimony, and taunted with the mistaken extravagance of a stocking-maker or a porter-brewer.'

'What pleasure can such people find in travelling?' wondered Mr. St. George.

'As much pleasure and more profit than half the young men of the present day,' replied a middle-aged English gentleman, who was a kinsman of the St. Georges, and called them cousins. 'In my time travelling was undertaken on a very different system to what it is now. The English youth then travelled to frequent, what Lord Bacon says are "especially to be seen and observed, the Courts of Princes." You all travel now, it appears, to look at mountains and catch cold in spouting trash on lakes by moonlight.'

'But, my dear sir!' said the Baron, 'although I grant you that the principal advantages of travel must be the opportunity which it affords us of becoming acquainted with human nature, knowledge, of course, chiefly gained where human beings most congregate, great cities, and, as you say, the Courts of Princes; still, one of its great benefits is, that it en-

larges a man's experience, not only of his fellow-creatures in particular, but of nature in general. Many men pass through life without seeing a sunrise: a traveller cannot. If human experience be gained by seeing men in their undress, not only when they are conscious of the presence of others, natural experience is only to be acquired by studying nature at all periods, not merely when man is busy and the beasts asleep.'

'But what is the use of this deep experience of nature? Men are born to converse with men, not with stocks and stones. He who has studied Le Sage will be more happy and more successful in this world than the man who muses over Rousseau.'

'I agree with you. I have no wish to make man an anchorite. But as to the benefit of a thorough experience of nature, it appears to me to be evident. It increases our stock of ideas.'

'So does everything.'

'But it does more than this. It calls into being new emotions, it gives rise to new and beautiful associations; it creates that salutary state of mental excitement which renders our ideas more lucid and our conclusions more sound. Can we too much esteem a study which at the same time stimulates imagination and corrects the judgment?'

'Do not you think that a communion with nature is calculated to elevate the soul,' said Lady Madeleine, 'to——?'

'So is reading your Bible. A man's soul should always be elevated. If not, he might look at mountains for ever, but I should not trust him a jot more.'

'But, sir,' continued the Baron, with unusual warmth, 'I am clear that there are cases in which

the influence of nature has worked what you profess to treat as an impossibility or a miracle. I am myself acquainted with an instance of a peculiar character. A few years ago, a gentleman of high rank found himself exposed to the unhappy suspicion of being connected with some dishonourable transactions which took place in the highest circles of England. Unable to find any specific charge which he could meet, he added one to the numerous catalogue of those unfortunate beings who have sunk in society, the victims of a surmise. He quitted England, and, disgusted with the world, became the profligate which he had been falsely believed to be. At the house of Cardinal ——, at Naples, celebrated for its revels, this gentleman became a constant guest. He entered with a mad eagerness into every species of dissipation, although none gave him pleasure, and his fortune, his health, and the powers of his mind were all fast vanishing. One night of frantic dissipation a mock election of Master of the Sports was proposed, and the hero of my tale had the splendid gratification of being chosen by unanimous consent to this new office. About two o'clock of the same night he left the palace of the Cardinal, with an intention of returning; his way on his return led by the Chiaja. It was one of those nights which we witness only in the south. The blue and brilliant sea was sleeping beneath a cloudless sky; and the moon not only shed her light over the orange and lemon trees, which, springing from their green banks of myrtle, hung over the water, but added fresh lustre to the white domes and glittering towers of the city, and flooded Vesuvius and the distant coast with light as far even as Capua. The individual of whom I am speaking

had passed this spot on many nights when the moon was not less bright, the waves not less silent, and the orange trees not less sweet; but to-night something irresistible impelled him to stop. What a contrast to the artificial light and heat and splendour of the palace to which he was returning! He mused in silence. Would it not be wiser to forget the world's injustice in gazing on a moonlit ocean than in discovering in the illumined halls of Naples the baseness of the crowd which forms the world's power? To enjoy the refreshing luxury of a fanning breeze which now arose he turned and gazed on the other side of the bay; upon his right stretched out the promontory of Pausilippo; there were the shores of Baiæ. But it was not only the loveliness of the land which now overcame his spirit; he thought of those whose fame had made us forget even the beauty of these shores in associations of a higher character and a more exalted nature. He remembered the time when it was his only wish to be numbered among them. How had his early hopes been fulfilled! What just account had he rendered to himself and to his country; that country that had expected so much, that self that had aspired even to more!

'Day broke over the city and found him still pacing the Chiaja; he did not return to the Cardinal's palace, and in two days he had left Naples. I can myself, from personal experience, aver that this individual is now a useful and honourable member of society. The world speaks of him in more flattering terms.'

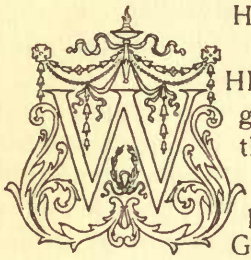
The Baron spoke with energy and animation. Miss Fane, who had been silent, and who certainly had not encouraged by any apparent interest the previous

conversation of the Baron, listened to this anecdote with eager attention; but the effect it produced upon Lady Madeleine Trevor was remarkable.

Soon after this the party broke up. The promenade followed; the Grand Duke, his compliments, and courtiers; then came the Redoute. Mr. Hermann bowed low as the gentlemen walked up to the table. The Baron whispered Vivian that it was 'expected' that they should play, and give the tables a chance of winning back their money. Vivian staked with the carelessness of one who wishes to lose; as is often the case under such circumstances, he again left the Redoute a considerable winner. He parted with the Baron at his Excellency's door and proceeded to the next, which was his own. Here he stumbled over something at the doorway which appeared like a large bundle; he bent down with his light to examine it, and found Essper George lying on his back with his eyes half-open. It was some moments before Vivian perceived he was asleep; stepping gently over him, he entered his apartment.

CHAPTER IX.

Humble Devotion.



HEN Vivian rose in the morning a gentle tap at his door announced the presence of an early visitor, who, being desired to enter, appeared in the person of Essper George.

'Do you want anything, sir?' asked Essper, with a submissive air.

Vivian stared at him for a moment, and then ordered him to come in.

'I had forgotten, Essper, until this moment, that on returning to my room last night I found you sleeping at my door. This also reminds me of your conduct in the saloon yesterday; and as I wish to prevent the repetition of such improprieties, I shall take this opportunity of informing you, once for all, that if you do not in future conduct yourself with more discretion, I must apply to the Maitre d'Hôtel. Now, sir, what do you want?'

Essper was silent, and stood with his hands crossed on his breast, and his eyes fixed on the ground.

'If you do not want anything, quit the room immediately.'

Here the singular being began to weep.

'Poor fellow!' thought Vivian, 'I fear, with all thy wit and pleasantry, thou art, after all, but one of those capriccios which Nature sometimes indulges in, merely to show how superior is her accustomed order to eccentricities, even accompanied with rare powers.'

'What is your wish, Essper?' continued Vivian, in a kinder tone. 'If there be any service that I can do you, you will not find me backward. Are you in trouble? you surely are not in want?'

'No!' sobbed Essper; 'I wish to be your servant:' here he hid his face in his hands.

'My servant! why surely it is not very wise to seek dependence upon any man. I am afraid that you have been keeping company too much with the lacqueys that are always loitering about these bathing-places. Ernstorff's green livery and sword, have they not turned your brain, Essper?'

'No, no, no! I am tired of living alone.'

'But remember, to be a servant, you must be a person of regular habits and certain reputation. I have myself a good opinion of you, but I have myself seen very little of you, though more than any one here, and I am a person of a peculiar turn of mind. Perhaps there is not another individual in this house who would even allude to the possibility of engaging a servant without a character.'

'Does the ship ask the wind for a character when he bears her over the sea without hire and without reward? and shall you require a character from me when I request to serve you without wages and without pay?'

'Such an engagement, Essper, it would be impossible for me to enter into, even if I had need of your services, which at present I have not. But I tell you

frankly that I see no chance of your suiting me. I should require an attendant of steady habits and experience; not one whose very appearance would attract attention when I wished to be unobserved, and acquire a notoriety for the master which he detests. I warmly advise you to give up all idea of entering into a state of life for which you are not in the least suited. Believe me, your stall will be a better friend than a master. Now leave me.'

Essper remained one moment with his eyes still fixed on the ground; then walking very rapidly up to Vivian, he dropped on his knees, kissed his hand, and disappeared.

Mr. St. George breakfasted with the Baron, and the gentlemen called on Lady Madeleine early in the morning to propose a drive to Stein Castle; but she excused herself, and Vivian following her example, the Baron and Mr. St. George 'patronised' the Fitzlooms, because there was nothing else to do. Vivian again joined the ladies in their morning walk, but Miss Fane was not in her usual high spirits. She complained more than once of her cousin's absence; and this, connected with some other circumstances, gave Vivian the first impression that her feelings towards Mr. St. George were not merely those of a relation. As to the Chevalier de Bœffleurs, Vivian soon found that it was utterly impossible to be on intimate terms with a being without an idea. The Chevalier was certainly not a very fit representative of the gay, gallant, mercurial Frenchman: he rose very late, and employed the whole of the morning in reading the French journals and playing billiards alternately with Prince Salvinski and Count von Altenburgh.

These gentlemen, as well as the Baron, Vivian, and Mr. St. George, were to dine this day at the New House.

They found assembled at the appointed hour a party of about thirty individuals. The dinner was sumptuous, the wines superb. At the end of the banquet the company adjourned to another room, where play was proposed and immediately commenced. His Imperial Highness did not join the game, but, seated in a corner of the apartment, was surrounded by his aides-de-camp, whose business was to bring their master constant accounts of the fortunes of the table and the fate of his bets. His Highness did not stake.

Vivian soon found that the game was played on a very different scale at the New House to what it was at the Redoute. He spoke most decidedly to the Baron of his detestation of gambling, and expressed his unwillingness to play; but the Baron, although he agreed with him in his sentiments, advised him to conform for the evening to the universal custom. As he could afford to lose, he consented, and staked boldly. This night very considerable sums were lost and won; but none returned home greater winners than Mr. St. George and Vivian Grey.

CHAPTER X.

Dangerous Sport.

THE first few days of an acquaintance with a new scene of life and with new characters generally appear to pass very slowly; not certainly from the weariness which they induce, but rather from the keen attention which every little circumstance commands. When the novelty has worn off, when we have discovered that the new characters differ little from all others we have met before, and that the scene they inhabit is only another variety of the great order we have so often observed, we relapse into our ancient habits of inattention; we think more of ourselves, and less of those we meet; and musing our moments away in reverie, or in a vain attempt to cheat the coming day of the monotony of the present one, we begin to find that the various-vested hours have bounded and are bounding away in a course at once imperceptible, uninteresting, and unprofitable. Then it is that, terrified at our nearer approach to the great river whose dark windings it seems the business of all to forget, we start from our stupor to mourn over the rapidity of that collective sum of

past time, every individual hour of which we have in turn execrated for its sluggishness.

Vivian had now been three weeks at Ems, and the presence of Lady Madeleine Trevor and her cousin alone induced him to remain. Whatever the mystery existing between Lady Madeleine and the Baron, his efforts to attach himself to her party had been successful. The great intimacy subsisting between the Baron and her brother materially assisted in bringing about this result. For the first fortnight the Baron was Lady Madeleine's constant attendant in the evening promenade, and sometimes in the morning walk; and though there were few persons whose companionship could be preferred to that of Baron von Konigstein, still Vivian sometimes regretted that his friend and Mr. St. George had not continued their rides. The presence of the Baron seemed always to have an unfavourable influence upon the spirits of Miss Fane, and the absurd and evident jealousy of Mr. St. George prevented Vivian from finding in her agreeable conversation some consolation for the loss of the sole enjoyment of Lady Madeleine's exhilarating presence. Mr. St. George had never met Vivian's advances with cordiality, and he now treated him with studied coldness.

The visits of the gentlemen to the New House had been frequent. The saloon of the Grand Duke was open every evening, and in spite of his great distaste for the fatal amusement which was there invariably pursued, Vivian found it impossible to decline frequently attending without subjecting his motives to painful misconception. His extraordinary fortune did not desert him, and rendered his attendance still more a duty. The Baron was not so successful as

on his first evening's venture at the Redoute; but Mr. St. George's star remained favourable. Of Essper Vivian had seen little. In passing through the bazaar one morning, which he seldom did, he found, to his surprise, that the former conjuror had doffed his quaint costume, and was now attired in the usual garb of men of his condition of life. As Essper was busily employed at the moment, Vivian did not stop to speak to him; but he received a respectful bow. Once or twice, also, he had met Essper in the Baron's apartments; and he seemed to have become a very great favourite with the servants of his Excellency and the Chevalier de Bœffleurs, particularly with his former butt, Ernstorff, to whom he now behaved with great deference.

For the first fortnight the Baron's attendance on Lady Madeleine was constant. After this time he began to slacken in his attentions. He first disappeared from the morning walks, and yet he did not ride; he then ceased from joining the party at Lady Madeleine's apartments in the evening, and never omitted increasing the circle at the New House for a single night. The whole of the fourth week the Baron dined with his Imperial Highness. Although the invitation had been extended to all the gentlemen from the first, it had been agreed that it was not to be accepted, in order that the ladies should not find their party in the saloon less numerous or less agreeable. The Baron was the first to break through a rule which he had himself proposed; and Mr. St. George and the Chevalier de Bœffleurs soon followed his example.

'Mr. Grey,' said Lady Madeleine one evening, as she was about to leave the gardens, 'we shall be happy to see you to-night, if you are not engaged.'

'I fear that I am engaged,' said Vivian; for the receipt of some letters from England made him little inclined to enter into society.

'Oh, no! you cannot be,' said Miss Fane: 'pray come! I know you only want to go to that terrible New House. I wonder what Albert can find to amuse him there; I fear no good. Men never congregate together for any beneficial purpose. I am sure, with all his gastronomical affectations, he would not, if all were right, prefer the most exquisite dinner in the world to our society. As it is, we scarcely see him a moment. I think that you are the only one who has not deserted the saloon. For once, give up the New House.'

Vivian smiled at Miss Fane's warmth, and could not persist in his refusal, although she did dilate most provokingly on the absence of her cousin. He therefore soon joined them.

'Lady Madeleine is assisting me in a most important work, Mr. Grey. I am making drawings of the Valley of the Rhine. I know that you are acquainted with the scenery; you can, perhaps, assist me with your advice about this view of Old Hatto's Castle.'

Vivian was so completely master of every spot in the Rhineland that he had no difficulty in suggesting the necessary alterations. The drawings were vivid representations of the scenery which they professed to depict, and Vivian forgot his melancholy as he attracted the attention of the fair artist to points of interest unknown or unnoticed by the guide-books and the diaries.

'You must look forward to Italy with great interest, Miss Fane?'

'The greatest! I shall not, however, forget the Rhine, even among the Apennines.'

'Our intended fellow-travellers, Lord Mounteney and his family, are already at Milan,' said Lady Madeleine to Vivian; 'we were to have joined their party. Lady Mounteney is a Trevor.'

'I have had the pleasure of meeting Lord Mounteney in England, at Sir Berdmore Scrope's: do you know him?'

'Slightly. The Mounteneys pass the winter at Rome, where I hope we shall join them. Do you know the family intimately?'

'Mr. Ernest Clay, a nephew of his Lordship's, I have seen a great deal of; I suppose, according to the adopted phraseology, I ought to describe him as my friend, although I am ignorant where he is at present; and although, unless he is himself extremely altered, there scarcely can be two persons who now more differ in their pursuits and tempers than ourselves.'

'Ernest Clay! is he a friend of yours? He is at Munich, attached to the Legation. I see you smile at the idea of Ernest Clay drawing up a protocol!'

'Madeleine, you have never read me Caroline Mounteney's letter, as you promised,' said Miss Fane; 'I suppose full of raptures; "the Alps and Apennines, the Pyrenæan and the River Po?"'

'By no means; the whole letter is filled with an account of the ballet at La Scala, which, according to Caroline, is a thousand times more interesting than Mont Blanc or the Simplon.'

'One of the immortal works of Vigano, I suppose,' said Vivian; 'he has raised the ballet of action to an

equality with tragedy. I have heard my father mention the splendid effect of his Vestale and his Otello.'

'And yet,' said Violet, 'I do not like Othello to be profaned. It is not for operas and ballets. We require the thrilling words.'

'It is very true; yet Pasta's acting in the opera was a grand performance; and I have myself seldom witnessed a more masterly effect produced by any actor in the world than I did a fortnight ago, at the Opera at Darmstadt, by Wild in Othello.'

'I think the history of Desdemona is the most affecting of all tales,' said Miss Fane.

'The violent death of a woman, young, lovely, and innocent, is assuredly the most terrible of tragedies,' observed Vivian.

'I have often asked myself,' said Miss Fane, 'which is the most terrible destiny for the young to endure: to meet death after a life of anxiety and suffering, or suddenly to be cut off in the enjoyment of all things that make life delightful.'

'For my part,' said Vivian, 'in the last instance, I think that death can scarcely be considered an evil. How infinitely is such a destiny to be preferred to that long apprenticeship of sorrow, at the end of which we are generally as unwilling to die as at the commencement!'

'And yet,' said Miss Fane, 'there is something fearful in the idea of sudden death.'

'Very fearful,' muttered Vivian, 'in some cases;' for he thought of one whom he had sent to his great account before his time.

'Violet, my dear!' said Lady Madeleine, 'have you finished your drawing of the Bingenloch?' But Miss Fane would not leave the subject.

'Very fearful in all cases, Mr. Grey. How few of us are prepared to leave this world without warning! And if from youth, or sex, or natural disposition, a few may chance to be better fitted for the great change than their companions, still I always think that in those cases in which we view our fellow-creatures suddenly departing from this world, apparently without a bodily or mental pang, there must be a moment of suffering which none of us can understand; a terrible consciousness of meeting death in the very flush of life; a moment of suffering which, from its intense and novel character, may appear an eternity of anguish. I have always looked upon such an end as the most fearful of dispensations.'

'Violet, my dear,' said her Ladyship, 'let us talk no more of death. You have been silent a fortnight. I think to-night you may sing.' Miss Fane rose and sat down to the instrument.

It was a lively air, calculated to drive away all melancholy feelings, and cherishing sunny views of human life. But Rossini's Muse did not smile to-night upon her who invoked its gay spirit; and ere Lady Madeleine could interfere Violet Fane had found more congenial emotions in one of Weber's prophetic symphonies.

O Music! miraculous art, that makes the poet's skill a jest, revealing to the soul inexpressible feelings by the aid of inexplicable sounds! A blast of thy trumpet, and millions rush forward to die; a peal of thy organ, and uncounted nations sink down to pray. Mighty is thy threefold power!

First, thou canst call up all elemental sounds, and scenes, and subjects, with the definiteness of reality.

Strike the lyre! Lo! the voice of the winds, the flash of the lightning, the swell of the wave, the solitude of the valley!

Then thou canst speak to the secrets of a man's heart as if by inspiration. Strike the lyre! Lo! our early love, our treasured hate, our withered joy, our flattering hope!

And, lastly, by thy mysterious melodies thou canst recall man from all thought of this world and of himself, bringing back to his soul's memory dark but delightful recollections of the glorious heritage which he has lost, but which he may win again. Strike the lyre! Lo! Paradise, with its palaces of inconceivable splendour and its gates of unimaginable glory!

When Vivian left the apartment of Lady Madeleine he felt no inclination to sleep, and, instead of retiring to rest, he bent his steps towards the gardens. It was a rich summer night; the air, recovered from the sun's scorching rays, was cool, not chilling. The moon was still behind the mountains; but the dark blue heavens were studded with innumerable stars, whose tremulous light quivered on the face of the river. All human sounds had ceased to agitate; and the note of the nightingale and the rush of the waters banished monotony without disturbing reflection. But not for reflection had Vivian Grey deserted his chamber: his heart was full, but of indefinable sensations, and, forgetting the world in the intenseness of his emotions, he felt too much to think.

How long he had been pacing by the side of the river he knew not, when he was awakened from his reverie by the sound of voices. He looked up, and saw lights moving at a distance. The party at the

New House had just broken up. He stopped beneath a branching elm-tree for a moment, that the sound of his steps might not attract their attention, and at this very instant the garden gate opened and closed with great violence. The figure of a man approached. As he passed Vivian the moon rose up from above the brow of the mountain, and lit up the countenance of the Baron. Despair was stamped on his distracted features.

CHAPTER XI.

Lady Madeleine's Confidence.

ON THE evening of the next day there was to be a grand fête given at the New House by his Imperial Highness. The ladies would treasure their energies for the impending ball, and the morning was to pass without an excursion. Only Lady Madeleine, whom Vivian met taking her usual early promenade in the gardens, seemed inclined to prolong it, and even invited him to be her companion. She talked of the fête, and she expressed a hope that Vivian would accompany their party; but her air was not festive, she seemed abstracted and disturbed, and her voice more than once broke off abruptly at the commencement of a sentence which it seemed she had not courage to finish.

At length she said suddenly, 'Mr. Grey, I cannot conceal any longer that I am thinking of a very different subject from the ball. As you form part of my thoughts, I shall not hesitate to disburthen my mind to you. I wish not to keep you in suspense. It is of the mode of life which I see my brother, which I see you, pursuing here that I wish to speak,' she

added with a tremulous voice. 'May I speak with freedom?'

'With the most perfect unreserve and confidence.'

'You are aware that Ems is not the first place at which I have met Baron von Konigstein.'

'I am not ignorant that he has been in England.'

'It cannot have escaped you that I acknowledged his acquaintance with reluctance.'

'I should judge, with the greatest.'

'And yet it was with still more reluctance that I prevailed upon myself to believe you were his friend. I experienced great relief when you told me how short and accidental had been your acquaintance. I have experienced great pain in witnessing to what that acquaintance has led; and it is with extreme sorrow for my own weakness, in not having had courage to speak to you before, and with a hope of yet benefiting you, that I have been induced to speak to you now.'

'I trust there is no cause either for your sorrow or your fear; but much, much cause for my gratitude.'

'I have observed the constant attendance of yourself and my brother at the New House with the utmost anxiety. I have seen too much not to be aware of the danger which young men, and young men of honour, must always experience at such places. Alas! I have seen too much of Baron von Konigstein not to know that at such places especially his acquaintance is fatal. The evident depression of your spirits yesterday determined me on a step which I have for the last few days been considering. I can learn nothing from my brother. I fear that I am even now too late; but I trust that, whatever may be your situa-

tion, you will remember, Mr. Grey, that you have friends; that you will decide on nothing rash.'

'Lady Madeleine,' said Vivian, 'I will not presume to express the gratitude which your generous conduct allows me to feel. This moment repays me for a year of agony. I affect not to misunderstand your meaning. My opinion, my detestation of the gaming table, has always been, and must always be, the same. I do assure you this, and all things, upon my honour. Far from being involved, my cheek burns while I confess that I am master of a considerable sum acquired by this unhallowed practice. You are aware of the singular fortune which awaited my first evening at Ems; that fortune was continued at the New House the very first day I dined there, and when, unexpectedly, I was forced to play. That fatal fortune has rendered my attendance at the New House necessary. I found it impossible to keep away without subjecting myself to painful observations. My depression of yesterday was occasioned by the receipt of letters from England. I am ashamed of having spoken so much about myself, and so little about those for whom you are more interested. So far as I can judge, you have no cause, at present, for any uneasiness with regard to Mr. St. George. You may, perhaps, have observed that we are not very intimate, and therefore I cannot speak with any precision as to the state of his fortunes; but I have reason to believe that they are by no means unfavourable. And as for the Baron——'

'Yes, yes!'

'I hardly know what I am to infer from your observations respecting him. I certainly should infer something extremely bad, were not I conscious that,

after the experience of five weeks, I, for one, have nothing to complain of him. The Baron, certainly, is fond of play; plays high, indeed. He has not had equal fortune at the New House as at the Redoute; at least I imagine so, for he has given me no cause to believe, in any way, that he is a loser.'

'If you could only understand the relief I feel at this moment, I am sure you would not wonder that I prevailed upon myself to speak to you. It may still be in my power, however, to prevent evil.'

'Yes, certainly! I think the best course now would be to speak to me frankly respecting Von Konigstein; and, if you are aware of anything which has passed in England of a nature——'

'Stop!' said Lady Madeleine, agitated. Vivian was silent, and some moments elapsed before his companion again spoke. When she did her eyes were fixed on the ground, and her tones were low; but her voice was calm and steady.

'I am going to accept, Mr. Grey, the confidence which you have proffered me; but I do not affect to conceal that I speak, even now, with reluctance; an effort, and it will soon be over. It is for the best.' Lady Madeleine paused one moment, and then resumed with a firm voice:

'Upwards of six years have now passed since Baron von Konigstein was appointed Minister to London from the Court of ——. Although apparently young for such an important mission, he had already distinguished himself as a diplomatist; and with all the advantages of brilliant talents, various accomplishments, rank, reputation, person, and a fascinating address, I need not tell you that he immediately became of consideration, even in the highest circles.

Mr. Trevor — I was then just married — was at this period in office, and was constantly in personal communication with the Baron. They became intimate, and he was our constant guest. He had the reputation of being a man of pleasure. He was one for whose indiscretions there might be some excuse; nor had anything ever transpired which could induce us to believe that Baron von Konigstein could be guilty of anything but an indiscretion. At this period a relation and former ward of Mr. Trevor's, a young man of considerable fortune, and one whom we all fondly loved, resided in our family. We considered him as our brother. With this individual Baron von Konigstein formed a strong friendship; they were seldom apart. Our relation was not exempted from the failings of young men. He led a dissipated life; but he was very young; and as, unlike most relations, we never allowed any conduct on his part to banish him from our society, we trusted that the contrast which his own family afforded to his usual companions would in time render his habits less irregular. We had now known Baron von Konigstein for upwards of a year and a half, intimately. Nothing had transpired during this period to induce Mr. Trevor to alter the opinion which he had entertained of him from the first; he believed him to be a man of honour, and, in spite of a few imprudences, of principle. Whatever might have been my own opinion of him at this period, I had no reason to doubt the natural goodness of his disposition; and though I could not hope that he was one who would assist us in our plans for the reformation of Augustus, I still was not sorry to believe, that in the Baron he would at least find a companion very different from

the unprincipled and selfish beings by whom he was too often surrounded. Something occurred at this time which placed Baron von Konigstein, according to his own declaration, under lasting obligations to myself. In the warmth of his heart he asked if there was any real and important service which he could do me. I took advantage of the moment to speak to him about our young friend; I detailed to him all our anxieties; he anticipated all my wishes, and promised to watch over him, to be his guardian, his friend, his real friend. Mr. Grey,' continued her Ladyship, 'I struggle to restrain my feelings; but the recollections of this period of my life are so painful that for a moment I must stop to recover myself.'

For a few minutes they walked on in silence. Vivian did not speak; and when his companion resumed her tale, he, unconsciously, pressed her arm.

'I try to be brief. About three months after the Baron had given me the pledge which I mentioned, Mr. Trevor was called up at an early hour one morning with the intelligence that his late ward was supposed to be at the point of death at a neighbouring hotel. He instantly repaired to him, and on the way the fatal truth was broken to him: our friend had committed suicide! He had been playing all night with one whom I cannot now name.' Here Lady Madeleine's voice died away, but with a struggle she again spoke firmly.

'I mean with the Baron, some foreigners also, and an Englishman, all intimate friends of Von Konigstein, and scarcely known to the deceased. Our friend had been the only sufferer; he had lost his whole fortune, and more than his fortune: and, with a heart full of despair and remorse, had, with his

own hand, terminated his life. The whole circumstances were so suspicious that they attracted public attention, and Mr. Trevor spared no exertion to bring the offenders to justice. The Baron had the hardihood to call upon us the next day; of course, in vain. He wrote violent letters, protesting his innocence; that he was asleep during most of the night, and accusing the others who were present of a conspiracy. The unhappy business now attracted very general interest. Its consequence on me was an alarming illness of a most unfortunate kind; I was therefore prevented from interfering, or, indeed, knowing anything that took place; but my husband informed me that the Baron was involved in a public correspondence; that the accused parties recriminated, and that finally he was convinced that Von Konigstein, if there were any difference, was, if possible, the most guilty. However this might be, he soon obtained his recall from his own Government. He wrote to us both before he left England; but I was too ill to hear of his letters, until Mr. Trevor informed me that he had returned them unopened. And now, I must give utterance to that which as yet has always died upon my lips, the unhappy victim was the brother of Miss Fane!'

'And Mr. St. George,' said Vivian, 'knowing all this, which surely he must have done; how came he to tolerate, for an instant, the advances of such a man?'

'My brother,' said Lady Madeleine, 'is a very good young man, with a kind heart and warm feelings; but my brother has not much knowledge of the world, and he is too honourable himself ever to believe that what he calls a gentleman can be dishonest.

My brother was not in England when the unhappy event took place, and of course the various circumstances have not made the same impression upon him as upon us. He has heard of the affair only from me; and young men too often imagine that women are apt to exaggerate in matters of this nature, which, of course, few of us can understand. The Baron had not the good feeling, or perhaps had not the power, connected as he was with the Grand Duke, to affect ignorance of our former acquaintance, or to avoid a second one. I was obliged formally to present him to my brother. I was quite perplexed how to act. I thought of writing to him the next morning, impressing upon him the utter impossibility of our acquaintance being renewed: but this proceeding involved a thousand difficulties. How was a man of his distinction, a man, who not only from his rank, but from his disposition, is always a remarkable and a remarked character, wherever he may be — how could he account to the Grand Duke, and to his numerous friends, for his not associating with a party with whom he was perpetually in contact? Explanations, and worse, must have been the consequence. I could hardly expect him to leave Ems; it was, perhaps, out of his power: and for Miss Fane to leave Ems at that moment was most strenuously prohibited by her physician. While I was doubtful and deliberating, the conduct of Baron von Konigstein himself prevented me from taking any step whatever. Feeling all the awkwardness of his situation, he seized, with eagerness, the opportunity of becoming intimate with a member of the family whom he had not before known. His amusing conversation, and insinuating address, immediately en-

listed the feelings of my brother in his favour. You know yourself that the very morning after their introduction they were riding together. As they became more intimate, the Baron boldly spoke to Albert, in confidence, of his acquaintance with us in England, and of the unhappy circumstances which led to its termination. Albert was deceived by this seeming courage and candour. He has become the Baron's friend, and has adopted his version of the unhappy story; and as the Baron has had too much delicacy to allude to the affair in a defence of himself to me, he calculated that the representations of Albert, who, he was conscious, would not preserve the confidence which he has always intended him to betray, would assist in producing in my mind an impression in his favour. The Neapolitan story which he told the other day at dinner was of himself. I confess to you, that though I have not for a moment doubted his guilt, still I was weak enough to consider that his desire to become reconciled to me was at least an evidence of a repentant heart; and the Neapolitan story deceived me. Actuated by these feelings, and acting as I thought wisest under existing circumstances, I ceased to discourage his advances. Your acquaintance, which we all desired to cultivate, was perhaps another reason for enduring his presence. His subsequent conduct has undeceived me: I am convinced now, not only of his former guilt, but also that he is not changed; and that, with his accustomed talent, he has been acting a part which for some reason or other he has no longer any object in maintaining.'

'And Miss Fane,' said Vivian, 'she must know all?'

'She knows nothing in detail; she was so young at the time that we had no difficulty in keeping the particular circumstances of her brother's death, and the sensation which it excited, a secret from her. As she grew up, I have thought it proper that the mode of his death should no longer be concealed from her; and she has learnt from some incautious observations of Albert, enough to make her look upon the Baron with terror. It is for Violet,' continued Lady Madeleine, 'that I have the severest apprehensions. For the last fortnight her anxiety for her cousin has produced an excitement, which I look upon with more dread than anything that can happen to her. She has entreated me to speak to Albert, and also to you. The last few days she has become more easy and serene. She accompanies us to-night; the weather is so beautiful that the night air is scarcely to be feared; and a gay scene will have a favourable influence upon her spirits. Your depression last night did not, however, escape her notice. Once more let me say how I rejoice at hearing what you have told me. I unhesitatingly believe all that you have said. Watch Albert. I have no fear for yourself.'

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